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COVENTRY KERSEY DIGHTON
PATMORE. BY B. CHAMPNEYS

Swan Electric Engraving Co.

Coventry Patmore

from a photograph by Barraud. (1891)

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ST. MARY'S
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V. 1

Memoirs

and Correspondence of

Coventry Patmore

By

Basil Champneys

WITHDRAWN

Vol. I

REV. JAMES A. GRANT BEQUEST TO
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DEDICATION

A large proportion of what is most interesting and most authentic in these volumes is due to Mrs. Patmore's devoted foresight during her husband's life, and to her indefatigable industry then and later. I dedicate these volumes to her in recognition of the confidence which led her to entrust the work to me, and in the hope that they may seem to her a not altogether inadequate memorial.

PREFACE

IN the summer of 1891 I was staying at Hastings with Coventry Patmore. We went together to Rye, a town which had great charm for us both. While we were waiting at the station for the return train, he said to me that he had for some time past intended to ask me whether I should be willing to take charge of his papers and act as his literary executor after his death. He did not mention a biography, nor did I understand that this was included in the duties he wished me to undertake. I heard nothing further from him on the subject, and by his will he made Mrs. Patmore his sole literary executrix.

Soon after his death, she requested me to write a memoir of him. I hesitated for many reasons. It seemed unlikely that I could command sufficient leisure from other occupations to do this adequately within a reasonable time; nor did I consider myself qualified for the task further than by a deep interest in Patmore's personality and work, and by an intimate friendship of long standing. I hoped however to be able at least to contribute to the memoir. Subsequently I found that it must be done, if at all, by me alone, with the assistance Mrs. Patmore was able to afford. She has been indefatigable

in supplying recollections, copying letters and memoranda, conducting much of the necessary correspondence, and assisting generally. The biography includes nothing which has not passed her censorship as to fact: otherwise I have, from the first, assumed full responsibility and been allowed a free hand. I could have had no satisfaction in the work had I been hampered by any conditions (beyond the reticence due to the living) which would have impeded my endeavour to give a complete picture of my subject. Mrs. Patmore has indeed fully shared my view that Patmore's biographer could afford to be candid. There has been no pressure put upon me to present him after the likeness of so many subjects of biographies written or censored by near relations, in which the distinctive features are rubbed down, and a suggestion of the angelic thrown in as compensation. If my portrait fails to be life-like, it is not from suppression of facts or adaptation to a conventional standard.

Mrs. Patmore, for many years before her husband's death, had his biography in view. She often asked him about events in his earlier life and wrote memoranda concerning them from his dictation, copied portions of his letters which seemed to possess biographical interest, and gained information by all other means available to her. The records thus accumulated have been of inestimable value to me. Of other material there has, I hope, proved to be enough, though I have been frequently tantalized

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by coming on the track of important letters and documents which I have been unable to secure. Patmore was visited on occasions by capricious fits of destructiveness: he sometimes alienated papers of importance; while some of his letters have, in other hands, formed a part of holocausts which, for loss of literary treasures, have been simply tragic. What remains however is more than I should have expected to find, seeing that he was never, especially in later life, a great writer of letters.

By far the most interesting of the available documents are those relating to Patmore's first courtship and marriage; nor have there been any which have put so severe a strain upon the discretion of his biographer. The charm of these is so great, the light they throw on his own and on his first wife's character so intense, that the temptation to employ them too freely has been strong. A somewhat liberal use of them seems indeed to be both demanded and justified; demanded, because Patmore is best known as the poet of wedded love, and therefore a special interest attaches to records of his affection for the wife who was the chief motive of his verse; justified, for his published work abounds in candid self-expression, never more fully than on this very subject. Indeed the limits he has set are none too strait, and within these his biographer may move in safety; nor do I think that those who know his writing best will accuse me of having violated the boundary which he has indicated.

His father, Peter George Patmore, has a claim, scarcely inferior to Emily Patmore's, to figure somewhat largely in these pages. His relation to his eldest son was exceptionally close, and his influence on him, both natural and educational, is worth tracing. The elder Patmore was moreover in his own day (to some extent is still) the subject of literary comment and criticism, much of which can now for the first time be shown to have been unjust. I feel confident that Coventry Patmore would have been specially anxious to have old misunderstandings of his father's career and character cleared up, and a just estimate given of his merits and defects, both of which the son fully recognized. As regards the other members of Patmore's family whom I have endeavoured to sketch,—if temporary departures from my principal theme need justification, I may quote Patmore's words with regard to the "remoter stars" (vol. i., p. 262): "You cannot see them unless you look a little on one side of them." Similarly the reader may realise my main subject the better for occasionally having his "direct gaze" diverted to others; nor is Patmore's relation to them the less clearly illustrated by their figuring for a time as my immediate study. Moreover they were in life interesting to me, and it is my own fault if I have not made them interesting to others. In the chapters relating to these subordinate characters I have included such letters and remains as seemed necessary to make each sketch complete in itself.

I may note briefly the considerations which have dictated the arrangement here adopted, that of placing the bulk of the letters and remains in a second volume. A survey of the material for the biography convinced me that this was the only reasonable course. A large number of the best letters were in series, which could not fail to lose interest by being broken up, while they would have impeded the narrative had I introduced them into it bodily. I have however, in the first volume, made use of single letters where they have been specially apposite. It is curious that in very few instances have both original letter and answer come to hand: whenever such letters explained each other, I have printed them together. It is, I imagine, a common experience to find, as I have done, that a very large proportion of the letters are undated. In the case of such letters as seemed likely to gain thereby in interest, I have fixed such dates as could be inferred with any certainty.

In other respects too I have been to a scarcely less degree the passive instrument of my material. A life in which events played quite a subordinate part seemed scarcely to call for a strictly chronological memoir. The arrangement adopted is therefore one of subjects rather than of time. I have thought it best to complete each as it arose. These are however introduced in their proper sequence. Such personal descriptions of Patmore as I have been able to gather, or to give from my own observation, are

introduced in connection with the several sections of the narrative to which they apply. The chapters on Religion and Philosophy are placed in the second volume, that they may serve as an introduction to such of Patmore's unpublished writings as deal with these subjects.

The delay in finishing my task, the bulk of which has had to be done in holidays, is not without its compensations: it has made available much material which could not have been obtained earlier. For instance, the "Præ-Raphaelite Diaries," on which Messrs. Hurst and Blackett have kindly allowed me to draw with freedom, have only recently been published; and these throw valuable light upon a stage of Patmore's life, which but for them must have been very imperfectly illustrated. Also many important letters have come to hand quite late in the day.

I have to acknowledge help and advice from many friends. Dr. Garnett, who knew Patmore intimately for very many years, has not merely given me the benefit of his recollections, but has been indefatigable in bringing to my aid his accurate knowledge of literary history and his able criticism. Mrs. Garnett too has supplied some characteristic anecdotes. Mr. Aubrey de Vere has furnished me with recollections of Patmore, which have been of great value. I am also indebted to my brother A. C. Champneys and to my friend Sidney Colvin for important help; to Mr. Edmund Gosse for putting at my disposal Patmore's letters to him and his own

articles on Patmore published in the "Contemporary" and "North American" reviews; and to Mr. Frederick Greenwood for a valuable letter of Patmore's, and for permission to use letters which he wrote to Patmore when editing the "St. James's Gazette"; also for an interesting anecdote about Henry Patmore. Mr. Sargent has most kindly allowed me to reproduce a sketch he made of Patmore; and my brother-in-law, Lister Drummond, has helped me in certain important matters. I must also acknowledge valuable advice on matters of religion and philosophy from my friend the Baron Friedrich von Hügel and the Rev. George Tyrrell, S.J. Lord Tennyson has gone over with me the letters and memoranda relating to his father and mother, and has explained many of the allusions in them. Mr. George Allen has kindly allowed me to use Mr. Ruskin's letters to Patmore: Mr. Ruskin too gave his assent to their being printed, and allowed his secretary to explain many of the references which occur in them. I may also, while thanking on my own and on Mrs. Patmore's behalf all who have given us letters, mention specially Mrs. Allingham, Mr. H. S. Sutton, and Mrs. Herbert Fisher, who has supplied Patmore's letters to her mother, Mrs. Jackson. Mr. E. H. Pember, Q.C., has given me one or two characteristic anecdotes of Patmore's later life, and my sons and daughters have afforded me much general help, especially in copying letters and memoranda.

I have not considered it to be a necessary part of

my task to attempt a critical estimate of Patmore's work. I doubt if the time has yet arrived when his position among his contemporaries can be defined with any confidence, nor could I claim that my own appraisal should carry weight, or escape a heavy discount on the ground of friendship. I am content if what I have recorded of his personality, to me of no less interest and value than his work, shall prove to have contributed indirectly to the just appreciation which doubtless awaits him in the future.

Now that my work is done, I cannot but realize how little, as regards the essential matters of thought and character, can be added to the picture which Patmore has himself left of himself in his published works, the whole of which will be found by the attentive reader to abound in intimate and sincere self-revelation. These will in any case serve to supplement my own description ; and, that they may be left to do so in their integrity, I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to illustrate my subject by hitherto unpublished writings. The result which I most desire for these volumes is that they should induce my readers to devote to Patmore's published works such attention as they merit, but have, as regards the later and more important, hitherto failed to secure. From these the careful reader may compose for himself a portrait which will, I hope, not be essentially different from that which I have drawn, but which may be more vivid and life-like as well as of superior authenticity.

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CHRONOLOGICAL ABSTRACT OF C. PATMORE'S LIFE

As I have not adopted a strictly chronological system in the biography, the following table of the principal events of Patmore's life may be found useful by the reader.

	ÆT.		
1823		Born, July 23 (p. 1).[1]	
1839	16	At Collège de France: Essay on	(pp. 36-45).
1840	17	"Macbeth": Earliest poems.	
1844	21	"Poems" published (pp. 49-60).	
1845	22	Peter George and Eliza Patmore leave England (p. 61).	
1846	23	Appointment at British Museum, November (p. 65).	
1847	24	Engaged to Emily Augusta Andrews, May 17; married, Sept. 11 (p. 129).	
1846-1862		Early prose writings (pp. 105-113).	
1852	28	Promotes Metropolitan Rifle Club, January (pp. 71-76).	
1853	30	"Tamerton Church Tower" published, John W. Parker (pp. 113-114).	
1854	31	"The Betrothal," first part of "Angel in the House," John W. Parker.	(pp. 159-177).
1856	33	"The Espousals," second part of "Angel in the House."	
1860	37	"Faithful for Ever," third part of "Angel in the House."	
1863	40	"Victories of Love," fourth part of "Angel in the House."	
1862	39	Emily Augusta Patmore dies, July 5 (p. 134). "Children's Garland" published (pp. 200-206).	

[1] All the references are to vol. i.

	ÆT.	
1864	41	Journey to Rome, February. Conversion to Roman Catholicism, May. Engaged to Marianne Caroline Byles, May. Married, July 18. (pp. 211-214).
1865	42	Retires from British Museum.
1866	43	Buys Estate in Sussex, Heron's Ghyll (p. 224).
1868	45	Nine Odes privately printed (pp. 243-245).
1874	51	Leaves Heron's Ghyll (p. 233).
1875	52	Settles at the Mansion, Hastings (p. 315).
1877	54	"Life of Procter" published, George Bell and Sons (p. 331).
1878	55	"The Unknown Eros" } George Bell and Sons "Amelia" } (p. 247).
1880	57	Marianne Caroline Patmore dies, April 12 (p. 270).
1881	58	Married to Harriet Robson, September 13 (p. 339).
1882	59	Emily Honoria Patmore dies, July 13 (p. 270). Memorial Church commenced (pp. 334-339).
1883	60	Henry Patmore dies, February 24 (p. 296).
1884	61	Henry's poems published (p. 302).
1885	62	Later prose writings commenced (p. 315).
1889	66	"Principle in Art" published, George Bell and Sons (p. 331).
1891	68	Removes to Lymington (p. 339).
1893	70	"Religio Poetæ" published, George Bell and Sons (p. 339).
1895	72	"Rod, Root and Flower," George Bell and Sons (p. 339).
1896	73	Died, November 26 (p. 346).

THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF COVENTRY PATMORE'S WRITINGS

Poems. Fcap. 8vo. (E. Moxon.) 1844.

Tamerton Church Tower and other Poems. Fcap. 8vo. (Pickering.) 1853.

Do. (J. W. Parker.) 1854.

The Angel in the House. The Betrothal. Fcap. 8vo (J. W. Parker.) 1854.

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Faithful for Ever. (A Poem.) Fcap. 8vo. (J. W. Parker.) 1860.

The Angel in the House. 2 vols. Fcap. 8vo. J. W. Parker and Son. 1860.

Vol. I. only is of the third edition.

The Victories of Love. Fcap. 8vo. (Macmillan.) 1863.

The Angel in the House (including the Victories of Love). 2 vols. Fcap. 8vo. (Macmillan.) 1863.

Do. (No. 70 in Cassell's National Library.) 32mo. 1887.

Odes [privately printed]. Crown 8vo. 1868.

The Victories of Love. (A Poem.) . . . 4th edition. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1878.

The Victories of Love and other Poems, pp. 192. (No. 122 in Cassell's National Library.) 1888.

The Children's Garland from the best poets. Selected and arranged by Coventry Patmore. (Forming part of the "Golden Treasury Series.") 1862.

[Another edition.] Illustrated by J. Lawson. London. 1873. 8vo.

Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall.) An autobiographical fragment and biographical notes, etc. [Edited by C. P.] 8vo. (Bell.) 1877.

Florilegium Amantis. [Selections from the author's poems.] Edited by R. Garnett. Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) [1879.]

The Unknown Eros and other Odes, i-xxxi. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1877.

[Another edition.] i-xlvi. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1878.

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The Victories of Love. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1878.

(The last four volumes were issued as a collective edition of the Poems.)

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(Reprinted in 1890, 1894, 1897.)

Saint Bernard on the Love of God. Translated by M. C. and C. Patmore. 8vo. 1880.

Another edition. 1884.

How I Managed and Improved my Estate, etc. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1886.

Hastings, Lewes, Rye and the Sussex Marshes. Crown 8vo. (Bell.) 1887.

Principle in Art, etc. [Essays reprinted from the "St. James's Gazette"]. Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) 1889.

[Selections. Edited by A. W. Miles, with an Introduction by R. Garnett.] The Poets and the Poetry of the Century, etc. [1891, etc.]

Religio Poetæ. Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) 1893.

The Rod, the Root, and the Flower. Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) 1895.

The Angel in the House. (Bell.) London. Fcap. 8vo. 1896.

The Poetry of Pathos and Delight: passages selected by Alice Meynell, with a portrait after J. S. Sargent. Fcap. 8vo. (Heinemann.) 1896.

Principle in Art. New edition (revised and rearranged). Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) 1898.

Religio Poetæ. New edition (revised and rearranged). Fcap. 8vo. (Bell.) 1898.

CORRIGENDA ET EXPLICANDA

Vol. i., p. 13, sixth line from bottom, *for* "three" *read* "four."

Vol i., p. 111, line 3, *for* "1880 when Principles in Art," *read*, "1889 when Principle in Art."

Vol. i., first paragraph of chapter ix. I had not, till this had been printed off, heard of Lord Tennyson's saying, "Poeta nascitur *et* fit." Otherwise I should have preferred to express the view adopted in his words and on his authority.

Vol. i., p. 114. I see that the "Athenæum" in the obituary notice of Coventry Patmore, December 5, 1896, gives 1851 as the date of Patmore's expedition to Cornwall. The article, written by one who was at that date an intimate friend of Patmore's, has considerable authority on such a point. I have however adopted the date I have given in the text ("previous to 1845") for the following reasons: (*a*) Patmore's correspondence with his first wife, which is pretty complete, does not allude to any such journey; and therefore it is unlikely that it was made after his marriage. (*b*) It appears from a letter to H. S. Sutton, vol. ii., p. 159, that Patmore had commenced "Tamerton Church Tower," the poem founded on this expedition, in February, 1848. (*c*) From 1845 till 1847, Patmore could not have afforded such a tour.

As regards punctuation of letters, I have followed the originals where, as, for example, in Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's and Ruskin's, it seemed to me to be characteristic; in the greater portion I have endeavoured to correct it where it was defective.

Vol. i., p. 68, line 1. The actual date of Patmore's retirement was December 31, 1865.

Vol. i., p. 144, line 9, *for* "fifteen" *read* "sixteen."

Vol. i., p. 185, line 17, *for* "pension" *read* "grant."

COVENTRY PATMORE

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY AND CHILDHOOD

ABOUT the year 1760 John Stevens married Maria Böckmann,[1] the sister of a fairly well-known German artist. Their children were Robert, and another son who lived to maturity and married; Maria Clarissa (born in 1761), and two other daughters who died in childhood. Robert, who married but had no children, was a great traveller, a naturalist and botanical artist. Some of his drawings of trees and flowers are still preserved by the family. Their merit is scientific rather than artistic. He also had some literary talent.[2] Maria Clarissa Stevens married, in 1783, Peter Patmore, a silversmith and jeweller in business on Ludgate Hill. Peter and Maria Clarissa Patmore had one child, Peter George, who became a writer of some note. He was born in 1786, and in 1822 married Miss Eliza Robertson, a lady of Scotch family. They had four children, Coventry Kersey Dighton, the subject of this memoir, born July 23, 1823; George Morgan,

[1] This is the spelling given on the back of one of the pictures. The name is more often written Baeckmann.

[2] Charles Ollier writes to Coventry Patmore in 1856: "I have in my custody, belonging to you, a manuscript of singular ability by Mr. Stevens about persons who have borne the name of *Robert*." Ollier was an author, and a publisher in partnership with his brother. They had published for Leigh Hunt, Keats, and Shelley.

born 1825; Gurney Eugene, born 1826; and Eliza Blanche, born 1827.

Coventry Patmore therefore came of a good middle-class stock, distinguished by special association with painting, with the jeweller's art, and with literature; while, under the influence of his great-uncle, he was at an early age encouraged in the close study of nature. All these strains reappear in his personality and in his work. The love for jewels which he showed in later life may be considered an hereditary trait or a mere coincidence, as the reader pleases. Coventry Patmore was never brought into any contact with his grandfather's business, as Peter Patmore retired from it long before his grandson's birth, and P. G. Patmore, his father, had in early youth given up his claim to it. Though it is difficult to assign so special a tendency to pure heredity, the association is at least worth recording. The influence exercised over him by his grandmother, his great-uncle, and his father, are more definite; nor can the artistic element be ignored. This showed itself when Coventry Patmore was a boy in some proficiency in drawing, and later in an intense love and sound judgment of pictures, while in his second daughter it is more definitely manifest in very remarkable and original work.

The grandmother, Maria Clarissa Patmore, was from the first entirely devoted to her eldest grandchild. She was a woman of strong character and great intelligence. Patmore spoke of her as "one of the strongest-minded and most intellectual women I had ever met." Her son's marriage had evidently been of her contrivance. I gather from some extant correspondence that she had had Miss Robertson, a lady of some beauty and a moderate fortune, with her as a frequent visitor, almost as a companion, and with the co-operation of her friends, had brought the match about in spite of her son's preference for

celibacy. This, no doubt, enhanced the partiality which, even in ordinary cases, is often shown for the eldest grandchild.

During his earliest years Coventry spent most of his time at his grandmother's, who, as he used to tell, "did her best to spoil me and make me conceited. The first sentence she made me say was, 'Coventry is a clever fellow.'" She taught him to read and write, and to knit and darn. While he was acquiring the latter accomplishments by her side, she would tell him thrilling tales of battles fought in the early years of the century, or of the Gordon riots, of which she had been an eye-witness. He used to say that her accounts of these riots tallied in almost every particular with Dickens's description in "Barnaby Rudge." His imagination was greatly kindled and his reverence for the narrator strengthened by these first-hand stories. She is said to have been an accomplished needlewoman and something of an artist; to have had a vigorous constitution and exceptional energy. Her death was caused by a fall down-stairs in her ninety-third year (1853). Even at that date her hair retained its natural colour and her teeth were perfect. Coventry had among his family relics a lock of dark-brown hair, untinged by grey, which she had cut off for him at the age of eighty-seven. Only one letter of hers has been preserved. It is written on the back of one of Peter George Patmore's (printed pp. 36-42), which again is the only letter of his to his son that comes to hand.

"Pentonville, 10th Oct., 1839.

"My Dearest Dear Coventry,

"I think of you every Day, and *every* hour but particularly every Sunday; a beautiful day in France; the people all look so happy—and you are more so on that day—because you have your liberty, *think* if I could be with you one Sunday and walk in the Forest, and see *Paris*.

I thank you, my dearest for the beautiful little views.[1] I look at *them* and read your *letter every* day. I will take your advice and make myself as happy as I can without you, and you have a *Friend;* how delightful to meet with such a treasure at such a distance from home, you must tell him, I am sure I should like him, because he is *your Friend.* I am quite well but it is very cold *here*—so exposed to the north winds.

"I am as ever your own Dear, Dear Granny,
"C. M. PATMORE."

To his great-uncle, Robert Stevens, Coventry Patmore owed his first introduction to country life. A considerable part of his childhood was spent at Mr. Stevens's home at Woodford Green in the Epping Forest. Here Coventry and his brothers would roam together, leading a kind of man-of-the-woods life, and daring each other to deeds of hardihood. One amusement of theirs is recorded, which involved a Spartan discipline self-imposed. They used to tie each other's hands behind their backs, close their eyes, and jump into a quick-set hedge. He who bore the experience with the least flinching was considered the victor. But even as a mere child Coventry seems to have preferred solitary rambles, during which he might be alone with nature. He looked back on "the times when he first felt the living beauty of a field of buttercups, or the pure joy expressed by the daisies on the lawn, or the jewel-like brilliancy of ripe red currants in the evening sunlight" (this seems to foreshadow his later passion for rubies) as those of his greatest mental and moral growth, and would speak with gratitude of God's goodness in thus early revealing Himself to him. Such revelations he believed were given to all in childhood, though by many

[1] These were probably sketches of buildings and scenes in Paris. Patmore used, even late in life, occasionally to make sketches in his letters.

they were lost sight of through inattention or obscured by wilful denial of the light. It is impossible to ascertain how far Robert Stevens fostered these germs of religious feeling; but it is probable that he was the first to encourage Coventry to study nature, and that, himself an accurate student and careful illustrator, he could help to develop in him a faculty of observation, the basis of that descriptive power of which Patmore's poetry, even the earliest, gives proof.

Men of genius are generally believed to owe the larger share of it to their mothers. In the present instance there is no evidence of any such debt; and indeed very little that is interesting has been recorded of Eliza Patmore. She is said to have been handsome,[1] tall, and stately; cold in manner to all, and somewhat stern and authoritative with her children. She cared little for the literary pursuits which were so much to her husband and which their eldest son soon began to share with him. She seems to have resented the partiality shown to Coventry by his grandmother and father, to have had little natural sympathy with the ways of children, and to have been impatient of their foibles. Indeed she made her sons so fearful of rebuke that they would often blunder in the performance of her commands from mere nervousness. I gather too from an entry in Coventry Patmore's diary (see p. 143) that he was hurt at the cold and formal reception she accorded Emily Andrews upon their engagement, and contrasted his mother's manner with the warm-hearted, eager desire of welcome shown by his affianced wife. Eliza Patmore certainly possessed strength of character: she seems to have been tenacious of the religious belief in which she had been reared—that of a somewhat

[1] The only portrait of her is a drawing taken after her death by Mr. Holman Hunt. It shows a fine face, and the features are regular and strong.

rigid Presbyterian—which was never modified by the influence of her husband's agnosticism; and though she was not allowed to impart her views to her children, it is clear that she indirectly influenced her son by bringing him into association with her own relations who could be under no similar restriction. Her husband, in the few passages published and unpublished which relate to her, speaks of her with enthusiastic affection; and her son, who seldom mentioned her, invariably did so with respect. We may conclude that Coventry Patmore inherited from his mother consistency and strength of character as well as religious fervour, in both of which characteristics he contrasts definitely with his father. She died at Coventry's house, December 5, 1851.

One single scrap of her writing remains, which I am justified in printing only by its being brief and unique. It is of course addressed to her husband.

[1824.]

"DEAR GEORGE,

"This has this moment arrived. I do not know what to do about the check—I think I won't enclose it, as you will get some money of Colbourn.

"Baby[1] is quite well.

"Your affect^ate^

"ELIZA PATMORE."

"Tuesday morning.

"Will you bring Rabbit and Brandy and the things Mrs. Dod[2] is to purchase for me?"

The father's career and character call for fuller consideration.

[1] Coventry.

[2] The landlady of the London house in which P. G. Patmore had rooms.

PETER GEORGE PATMORE.

Pen sketch by himself.

CHAPTER II

PETER GEORGE PATMORE

PETER GEORGE PATMORE at an early age decided on a literary career, refusing a profitable opening in the family business in favour of his chosen pursuit. He wrote for a large number of periodicals, among others for "The Westminster," "The Retrospective Review," "Blackwood," "The London," and "The New Monthly." He was for some years reader and editor to Colburn, a rather fashionable publisher; but the connection was terminated by an event which resulted in a lawsuit, or rather in cross-suits. Colburn had been cast in damages for a libel which had appeared in "The Court Journal," of which he was proprietor, and endeavoured to recover from Patmore, under whose editorship the incriminating article had appeared. At the same time Patmore sued Colburn for salary, claimed under a somewhat complicated agreement. Each party ultimately lost his case, and both were dissatisfied with the result, while Patmore's income was, for the time, considerably reduced.[1]

In "My Friends and Acquaintance" he describes himself as "one of the managers" of the London Institution, and in this capacity he first made acquaintance with William Hazlitt, with whom he arranged for a series of lectures.

P. G. Patmore's more important works were "Imitations of Celebrated Authors, or Imaginary

[1] For further particulars see Appendix I.

Rejected Articles," some prose parodies more or less on the lines of "Rejected Addresses"; "Chatsworth," a series of stories with an introductory setting, after the manner of the "Decameron" (among the characters sketched in this introduction are D'Israeli, Bulwer Lytton, Mrs. Gore, and Mrs. Norton, as well as the writer's eldest son,[1] with other characters less easy to identify); "Letters on England," a criticism on English life, written "under the character of a Frenchman," and "The Mirror of the Months," which seems to me to be his best work: indeed much of it is so good, both for accurate observation of nature and in style, as almost to make the reader wonder that it has not survived in public esteem. No doubt what eventually killed it was the difficulty of maintaining interest and novelty through twelve distinct sections.

In 1845 P. G. Patmore, who had speculated in railways beyond his means, became deeply involved. William Hazlitt's grandson writes: "He came to my father in a state of great dismay, and asked his advice. 'Hazlitt,' he said, 'what, in God's name, am I to do? I am in for a million.' 'Do?' returned my father, 'why, stay where you are; they know well enough you haven't got it.'" Patmore however had to leave England for a time, and his sons were left to fend for themselves.

He seems to have been intimate with most members of the literary world of the day. Many of his friendships are recorded in the volumes which he published shortly before his death, entitled "My Friends and Acquaintance." His name occurs frequently in the literary records of the period, and correspondence which Coventry Patmore preserved

[1] See pp. 45-48. This volume was issued anonymously as edited by the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere," Mr. Plumer Ward, by whom the reading public assumed that it had been written.

gives evidence of a wide range of distinguished acquaintances.

He did not confine himself entirely to prose, but his productions in verse are neither many nor of distinguished merit. Some translations from Petrarch, with sonnets on Wordsworth and Sir Walter Scott, were printed in early numbers of "Blackwood," and his son preserved a manuscript volume containing a few sonnets to his wife, as well as a long and rather dreary poem about an unhappy marriage. The following seems to be as good as any verse he wrote, and shows that he appreciated Wordsworth as highly as did his son. Indeed, the allusions to Wordsworth and quotations from him in his prose works are frequent and appreciative.

"Wordsworth, thy name is precious to mine ear!
It comes not on my spirit like the shout
Of riotous mirth;—scattering its noise about
Till joy becomes half intermixed with fear,—
But to my heart it sinks in tones of clear,
Deep, pure, perpetual music. Mists of doubt,
That cling around my being, and put out
The lights of life, at that name disappear.
O, for a poet's voice, that I might frame
A lay of fitting thanks! I would not sing,
Like the proud nightingale's, a song of flame;
But, like the stock-dove's,—ever murmuring
Of quiet inward bliss—ever the same;—
Perpetual as my thanks—pure as their spring."

London, 1817.

It should be remembered that at this date appreciation of Wordsworth was by no means general.

P. G. Patmore died on Christmas Day, 1855. His son's respect and affection for him survived to the end, and the anniversary of his father's death was to the last observed by him as a day of seclusion.

There are however special incidents in P. G. Pat-

more's career which call for notice in fuller detail. The papers placed at my disposal throw new light upon affairs of his which have hitherto been imperfectly recorded. These, properly understood, serve to illustrate, whether by resemblance or contrast, the father's ethical relation to his son, whose prospects moreover were, at least to some extent, affected by them.

In 1821 P. G. Patmore acted as second to Mr. John Scott, the editor of "The London Magazine," in a duel with Mr. Christie, the friend of John Gibson Lockhart, in which Mr. Scott received a fatal wound.[1]

The meeting took place at 9 o'clock on the evening of February 16th, Mr. Traill acting as second to Mr. Christie, and P. G. Patmore to Mr. Scott. Mr. Christie behaved on this occasion, as he had done in all the earlier transactions, with the most perfect chivalry. The moon was shining brightly, and, when the principals had been placed, Mr. Christie found that he had an advantage in seeing Mr. Scott's head above the horizon. He therefore warned Mr. Scott, caused the position to be changed, and then, the signal given, fired in the air. This action on the part of one who had had

[1] It is irrelevant to my purpose to relate fully the circumstances which led up to the duel. It is enough to state that the original quarrel had been between Mr. Scott and Mr. John Gibson Lockhart, and turned on the question whether the latter was or was not the responsible and paid editor of "Blackwood's Magazine." Mr. Lockhart was represented in absence by Mr. Christie, on whom the quarrel came ultimately to be fixed. Had P. G. Patmore understood the letters he had received from William Blackwood and all that they implied, he would have been able to show in whose hands the management of the magazine actually rested. These letters are described below, pp. 22-25, and are printed in Appendix V. For further particulars of the dispute the reader is referred to Mr. Andrew Lang's "Life of Lockhart," which gives a full and accurate account of this intricate affair.

REV. JAMES
ST. MARY'S COL

but little direct interest in the quarrel should at once have ended the affair, and doubtless would have done so had the seconds been more experienced and consequently less flurried, or had they fully understood the etiquette of duelling. But as all four were civilians and literary men, who, at least in England, were not generally accustomed to "affairs of honour," some bungling was almost inevitable. The following is the account of the subsequent action, to which Dr. Darling, who was in attendance on Mr. Scott, testified as having been given him by Mr. Scott on the night following the duel.

"After the pistols were reloaded, and everything ready for a second fire, Mr. Traill called out, 'Now Mr. Christie, take your aim, and do not throw away your advantage as you did last time.' I [Mr. Scott] called out, 'What, did not Mr. Christie fire at me?' I was answered by Mr. Patmore, 'You must not speak: you have nothing for it but firing."

At the coroner's inquest which followed Mr. Scott's death, it was given in evidence that Mr. Patmore had complained of Mr. Christie's second for not formally announcing that his principal had "fired away," thus giving him no opportunity of asking Mr. Scott if he was satisfied. There can be no question that Mr. Patmore had failed to apprehend the position. It was clearly contrary to custom and etiquette that, under the circumstances, a second shot should have been called for. The proper course, I imagine, would have been for Mr. Traill to say to Mr. Patmore, "Mr. Christie did not aim at Mr. Scott. Do you wish the matter to proceed further?" Instead of taking this line, he seems merely to have been anxious that his principal should not, a second time, put himself at a disadvantage. But, if this view be correct, it seems unfair that Mr. Patmore should have had to bear the whole blame, which should at

least have been equally divided between the two seconds; though it was not unnatural that public opinion should go against the second of the man who lost his life.[1]

The view I have adopted may, I think, be reasonably deduced from material already published. There are however among P. G. Patmore's papers, preserved by his son, a number of letters and documents which throw additional light on the event, and which, even if they have to be taken as *ex parte* statements, still give ground for a far more definite and complete exculpation. The following letter, written the day after the duel, is sufficient testimony to the warm friendship which subsisted between principal and second, and to Patmore's poignant grief at the result of the duel:

"17 Febr.

"My dear Mother,

"The affair of my friend Scott has (I have the strongest reason to fear) terminated fatally. We went out yesterday evenᵍ. and he is wounded desperately. There is barely a hope of his life. If he dies I lose the dearest friend I ever had, among men. My sorrow and affliction are more than it is possible to express. All things that ever happened to me before are nothing, compared with this last fatal misfortune. I am stricken to the ground. For the first time in my life I confess that Fate, or Fortune, or whatever it may be, has been too strong for me. It is as much—it is almost more than I can do, to struggle against it. But I must and will. You and Eliza[2] must come up to me. Not immediately. In the meantime, be as easy as you can. I'll write to you again very shortly—making arrangements. For the present I am obliged to be out of the way. Write

[1] It is curious that in a play, "Marriage in Mayfair," written some fifteen years after the duel, P. G. Patmore should have put into the mouth of one of his characters the following words: "*Wildgoose.* The Devil! Of course they fired several times. Very scandalous of the seconds to suffer it."

[2] Miss Robertson whom he married.

directly to say how you are. Direct to Robt. Stirling Esqr., Gloucester Hotel, Piccadilly, London. You must expect to be at an uncertainty about [me] for a few days. I will, of course, end your suspense as soon as I can. Mind, there is no danger about *me*."

It is evident that Patmore anticipated an immediately fatal ending. Mr. Scott however lingered ten days. Mr. Patmore, realizing the difficulty of his position and the odium which he was likely to incur, wished to have at his disposal evidence for the vindication of his conduct. He therefore sent a friend, whose name does not appear, to obtain Mr. Scott's testimony on the two points which seemed most likely to be urged against him—the arrangement for meeting in the late evening, and the permission of a second exchange of fire. The following memorandum was written three days after the statement by Mr. Scott to which Dr. Darling testifies, but seven days before this had been given in evidence at the coroner's inquest, and is in Mrs. Scott's handwriting.

"Mr. Scott was not made aware till *after* his second fire that Mr. Christie had said that he had discharged his pistol in the air, no communication to that effect having been made by Mr. Traill to Mr. Patmore. Such a statement, had it been understood, would have been deemed by Mr. Scott and his friend completely satisfactory, and would necessarily have prevented any further proceedings.

"The proposal to meet at night, Mr. Scott states to have originated with Mr. Christie, but Mr. Scott willingly acceded to it, in order that the affair might be terminated as quickly as possible."

I find also three letters written shortly after Mr. Scott's death by his widow to P. G. Patmore. These show conclusively that, so far from feeling any resentment against him, she entirely acquits him of all blame, holds Mr. Christie's second to be responsible for the misadventure, and feels the deepest

sympathy for the trouble which his support of her husband had brought upon her correspondent. She completely endorses the view of the facts embodied in the memorandum, and admits that, even if her husband had made the statement to which Dr. Darling had testified (though on this point she seems to be extremely sceptical), he was, at the time, quite incapable of any clear recollection. She further testifies to the value of Patmore's influence over her husband in restraining his fiery nature, and implies that Patmore had on some former occasion saved him from the consequences of his habitual rashness. She explains that she has been prevented only by feminine delicacy and by the urgent advice of her friends from exonerating him in a more public manner, and looks forward to a complete vindication of his action in a memoir of her husband which she intends to write. The letters[1] are most creditable to her character and feelings, and give evidence of a high sense of justice, as well as of such patience and sympathy as under the circumstances could scarcely have been claimed or expected.

Though P. G. Patmore's letters are not forthcoming, it is easy to gather that they were far less generous and considerate than hers. He seems to have felt and to have expressed in no measured terms his resentment against Scott for "giving him away" in the statement said to have been made to Dr. Darling. Mrs. Scott very gently deprecates this condemnation of her dead husband, and behaves throughout as though it were her province to appease and console one who can scarcely be held to have been the principal sufferer. She writes too with womanly sympathy of the courtship then in progress between Patmore and his future wife, whom he married in the year following the duel, and playfully

[1] Printed in Appendix II.

upbraids him for his professed indifference, a *pose* which he seems to have adopted. The letters of this period are addressed to Patmore, who was then in hiding in Calais, under the names of "P. G. Pitt" and "P. G. Preston."

Mr. Lang, in his "Life of Lockhart," surmises that Mr. Patmore did not at once surrender himself because he wished that his absence might weaken the evidence against the others. I can however find no suggestion of this motive either in the correspondence or in P. G. Patmore's own memoranda. He seems indeed to have been greatly alarmed for his personal safety and for his property, which, had a verdict of manslaughter been recorded against him, might apparently have been forfeit. His legal advisers, who were none other than Keats's friends, John Hamilton Reynolds[1] and James Rice, were at first unable to mitigate his fears, and they advise an assignment of his property ("£10,000," as appears from an annotation in P. G. Patmore's writing) in order to put it out of reach of the law. Later, matters appear to have taken a more hopeful turn, and he is then urged to return to London, still preserving his *incognito*, and to be ready to surrender. Patmore however does not seem to have appeared at the trial. This resulted in the acquittal of the surviving principal and the seconds, and all fear of actual penalty was removed. Not so the scandal or the consequent trouble. This indeed ended only with P. G. Patmore's life. There are among his papers numerous memoranda made with a view to a public vindication of his conduct, and the latest of them bears so recent a date as 1853, thirty-two years after the duel, and but two years before his death. I have printed in Appendix IV. a paper which is evidently the draft of a manifesto intended to be put forth by his friends.

[1] Reynolds's letters are given in Appendix III.

It is not dated, and was, so far as I can ascertain, never published. As this event is still, after more than three-quarters of a century, a not infrequent subject of literary allusion, it seems to me no more than fair that the *apologia* should be made public.[1]

It is only necessary to add that, in spite of the obloquy which this transaction brought on him, P. G. Patmore seems to have maintained his former friendships and to have made many new ones, some of them with those who must have been fully cognizant of the circumstances of the duel, and whose character may be taken as a guarantee that his conduct had appeared, at least to them, not inexcusable. I think too that this, apparently the first painful experience of P. G. Patmore's life, served to make him more serious and steady. Up to this time he seems to have been somewhat vain, "dressy,"[2] fancying himself as a lady-killer, a frequenter of prize-fights—altogether to have led a rather frivolous life. Shortly after the duel, feeling no doubt the need of solid affection, he became engaged to the lady whom his mother had evidently chosen for him, and for whom, shortly before, he had disclaimed any special regard. In her honour he indites sonnets and other verses (never published) in the Petrarchian manner but tinged with an affectation of Byronic melancholy, which for general sentiment leave little to desire, and figures thenceforward as a thoroughly domestic

[1] Coventry Patmore was rather proud of his father's association with duelling. He thought it an honest and manly way of settling disputes, and held that its worst consequences were preferable to tame submission to an insult.

[2] W. C. Hazlitt writes: "Patmore was at one time a dandy, and affected two sorts of nether garments, one pair for walking, and another for sitting down. He once sat down, with unhappy results, in the promenading pair." When P. G. Patmore died only one debt of his was found to have been unpaid, and this was to a tailor. This may have been a mere chance.

character, a good husband, and a most indulgent father, especially to his eldest son.

The other principal cause of P. G. Patmore's unpopularity was the publication, in 1854, of "My Friends and Acquaintance." This work gave rise to some heated correspondence in "The Athenæum" and "North British Review," and Patmore was accused of injustice in exalting Mr. Plumer Ward above his deserts, and in disparaging Thomas Campbell in an equal degree,[1] as well as of many literary defects. There is no doubt plenty of truth in such strictures; but that it should have seemed worth while to make them, except for the purpose of rebutting definite charges, was unquestionably due to a misappreciation of the author's aims and endowments;—in fact, to his being taken too seriously by his critics. The volumes in question clearly make no pretence to provide a serious appraisement of the literary position of their subjects: in most cases they are little more than somewhat disjointed, fragmentary, and gossipy memoirs of various personalities with whom the writer had been brought in contact. Such as they are, they furnish considerable matter for more serious and critical biographical work, to which they for the most part do not attempt to attain, and for which the author had obviously no special qualification. Undoubtedly the most important study is that of Hazlitt, which, notwithstanding its diffuseness, inconsequence, and air of special pleading; in spite (or perhaps in virtue) of the self-contradictoriness of the description, conveys on the whole a picture of this strange, wayward, and quite abnormal personality

[1] P. G. Patmore had stated that Campbell had turned over the life of Mrs. Siddons to another writer. This charge was satisfactorily disproved in "The Athenæum," and is further shown to be untrue by a letter in the possession of Dr. Garnett.

which many will think at least as just and correct as that drawn by his enemies.

The least pleasant part of P. G. Patmore's association with Hazlitt, and that which offers the most striking contrast between the father and the son, is his connection with the "Liber Amoris."[1] That the father of Coventry Patmore, the poet of chaste love, should have encouraged such a correspondence as the book contains is strange enough; stranger still that he should have said of it: "There is nothing in poetry more truly poetical,[2] nothing more ennobling by the strength of its passion, while it is no less softening and humanizing by the depth and darkness of its pathos" (reading some letters which he prints, one almost wonders that he should not have written "bathos"); scarcely less strange that he should have been blind to the absurdity apparent in such passages as the following:

"I thought of the breakfasts I had promised myself with her ... and compared them to the one I had this morning."

"My tea, which used to refresh me when I got up, has no moisture in it. Oh! cold, solitary, sepulchral breakfasts."

All this only shows how complete, even in essential qualities, may be the difference between father and son. Those who knew Coventry Patmore would

[1] It may save readers the trouble of reference to this work, if I state here that the object of the *amour* recorded was the daughter of the landlord in whose house Hazlitt lodged, where she acted as maidservant. The bulk of the volume consists of letters from Hazlitt to P. G. Patmore and Sheridan Knowles.

[2] P. G. Patmore does not indeed stand quite alone in his opinion. Strange to relate, Mrs. Jameson pays the "Liber Amoris" a warm tribute in her "Commonplace Book." It was inevitable that, as Hazlitt's work, it should include some eloquent passages, which however can, I think, be appreciated by those only who succeed in ignoring their context.

be at no loss to conceive what, under similar circumstances, would have been his attitude; with what fierce indignation he would have bid the writer of the letters find some other receptacle for his unwholesome refuse; how he would have shrieked with contemptuous laughter at the bathos shown in such passages as I have quoted; how his one desire would have been that all these morbid lucubrations should have been summarily and mercilessly destroyed.

Coventry Patmore held and proclaimed with regard to these letters a very strong opinion, which I cannot but consider to be justified; not merely or mainly on account of the irregularity of the *amour*: this would not, in itself, have aroused in him such strong disgust. Hazlitt's intentions indeed were in the end "honourable," so far as circumstances allowed: that is to say, he came to have marriage in view, though he was still encumbered with a wife, from whom he had but an indefinite prospect of obtaining an invalid divorce. But apart from this, I should think it would be hard to find elsewhere an example of conduct more exactly the reverse of chivalrous. The confidences he makes in full detail (with characteristic delicacy, Hazlitt speaks of the endearments which passed as "liberties") by word and letter to his own friends, to the girl's parents and acquaintances (never, I imagine, could there have been so large a proportion of "telling" to "kissing"); the meanness with which he disparages her so soon as he finds her definitely beyond his reach; his utter lack of self-control both in passion and in spite, compose as squalid a picture as could be found in the most cynical fiction. Patmore felt extremely sore about his father's connection with the affair, and it was on this account that he did less than justice to Hazlitt's literary attainments; while the knowledge of the same critic's rancorous attacks on Coleridge,

Patmore's special admiration, must have gone far towards strengthening such prejudice.

The sequel of this association may as well be given here. As regards the elder Patmore, the friendship left a legacy of strife in the arrangements which after Hazlitt's death [1] had to be made by his friends for the payment of certain debts, and almost caused a breach with Procter, an old and valued friend of both (the details of the difference are not made very clear by the correspondence, nor are they worth elucidating); and many years after, Coventry Patmore finding among his father's papers some hitherto unpublished letters of the "Liber Amoris" series, sent them to the son, in order that he might have the satisfaction of destroying with his own hands these memorials of his father's erotic weakness;[2] and later finding that they had been sold for publication, he wrote to "The Times" as follows:

[1] P. G. Patmore and Procter were among those who tended Hazlitt in his last illness.

[2] The grandson seems to have written to Coventry Patmore later, in 1866, to ask for further papers relating to William Hazlitt. It is clear from the following correspondence that the letters alluded to above, as well as Coventry Patmore's own letter which accompanied them, had been turned into money.

"5, Albert Hall Mansions,
"Kensington Gore,
"November 24, '93.

"My dear Patmore,

"Well may you censure the tactlessness of this indelicate age, as instanced too often now-a-days in the Sale-room. I happen to possess a note of yours rather to the point in question. It is dated from Buxted Hall, N^r. Uckfield, Sussex, *Nov.* 7, '66 and runs and follows:

'My dear Sir,

When my father died I found among his papers a series of letters from your grandfather to him. These were of so *confidential a nature* that I thought no one but his son ought to

"HAZLITT'S LETTERS.

"*To the Editor of 'The Times'*

"SIR,—I think I have some right to protest against the public sale and proposed publication of the letters from Hazlitt to my father, extracts from which formed the basis of that wretched book the 'Liber Amoris.' At my father's death, these letters came into my possession, and, thinking that Hazlitt's son ought to have the assurance that documents calculated to be so damaging to his father's fame no longer existed, I sent them to him, taking it for granted that he would destroy them. Before his death, my father blotted out some lines from these letters, feeling, I suppose, that no eyes ought to see them. I am sorry now that I did not myself burn the whole mass of morbid trash, instead of intrusting the unpleasant secret of Hazlitt's mental and moral disease to the tender mercies of his heirs and administrators.

"I presume that, as my father's representative, I could, if I chose, stop the publication of these letters by injunction; but I feel that there would be some absurdity in my assumption of a tenderer care for Hazlitt's fame than that which is shown by his nearest relatives.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
"COVENTRY PATMORE.

"Lymington, Hants. Nov. 23 [1893]."

Thus the annoyance caused by the original association survived Hazlitt's death by more than sixty years.

have the disposal of them. I therefore gave them to your father. I have no other papers that would assist your purpose.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
C. PATMORE.'

W. C. Hazlitt, Esq.'

"Thinking you will not be displeased with me for copying this and sending it accurately to you, under the present circumstances,

"Believe me, dear Patmore, with every good and kind wish,
"Yours,
"ST. CLAIR BADDELEY."

Besides these, I think there are no records which throw so much light on the character of Peter George Patmore as those which give his relations with "Blackwood's Magazine." When this was started in 1817 he forwarded to the editor a contribution initialled "A. Z." which was cordially received by William Blackwood in that capacity. At this time Patmore may not have known under what auspices the periodical had been started, nor to what faction it was accredited; still less that it was to prove the special medium for virulent onslaughts upon those who were among his principal friends. He seems to have had some misgivings; and the editor of "Blackwood" is at pains to assure him that there is no intention to be libellous. Patmore undertakes to report Hazlitt's "Lectures on Poetry," and the notices are admitted with a qualifying supplement, lest "Maga" should be supposed to identify herself with Hazlitt's views. In a very short time Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and Keats come under the lash. As regards Hazlitt, a new friend (the friendship, indeed, commenced in connection with these papers),[1] he is content to defend him by a mild remonstrance against the epithet "Pimpled," which a scurrilous contributor had applied to him. Patmore denies the truth of the epithet in a physical, and fails to understand its meaning or applicability in a moral or intellectual sense. Probably the writer of the article cared neither for its truth nor applicability in either sense so long as it served to wound. Later, Hazlitt, attacked with increasing virulence in a paper entitled "Hazlitt cross-questioned," threatens a lawsuit, and Patmore is called on by the editor to compose the quarrel, which is somehow compromised.[2]

[1] I gather this from "My Friends and Acquaintance," but the narrative is strangely wanting in precision.

[2] The letters are printed in Appendix V.

He evidently occupies a serviceable if somewhat doubtful position with regard to "Maga." To the pillars of the publication he is by no means a *persona grata.* He is "Tims"[1] the "Cockney," a warrior in the wrong camp; useful for purveying news from London concerning the drama and such matters, for introducing the magazine to London readers; useful too as a mediator in case any "cockney" worm shall turn; also welcome as a writer, so long as he abstains from making too much fuss in the defence of his friends. He is tantalized with permissions to break a lance on their behalf (which offers however seem to have been ingeniously evaded), but holds on to the rather ignominious position he occupies until, in 1820, he is finally snubbed out of it, and within a few months is found acting as second in the duel in which "Maga" rather than any individual is the real antagonist.

There must have been a point at which the connection had ceased to be compatible with self-respect and loyalty to friendship; when he should have refused to write for the magazine, except on condition that the abuse of his friends should cease. One cannot ascertain how far his circumstances would have justified his making a definite stand;[2] but it is certain that a stronger man, his son for example, would have done so in defiance of circumstance. Meanwhile the letters themselves are of considerable interest, not merely because they throw valuable light upon much of the literary history of the day, but, even in a greater degree, for the revelations they afford concerning the much-discussed question of the early management of "Blackwood's Magazine."

[1] See "Noctes Ambrosianæ."

[2] The "ten thousand pounds" (see above, p. 15) however were presumably in hand, and Patmore pretends to desire no payment for his contributions, an affectation not uncommon at the time—probably originating with Lord Byron.

The letters alluded to are all in the same writing, some being signed "The Editor of Blackwood's Magazine," others "William Blackwood." "The Editor" "hands letters" to "Mr. Blackwood," and "William Blackwood" quotes extracts of letters from "the Editor." "My partner Mr. Jorkins" is always at hand in emergencies, inhabiting as he does the same material frame as "Mr. Spenlow;" and the editor's identity has been revealed to the "proprietors" alone, in a confidence which obviously risks no betrayal: so each part of this triplicate personality plays battledoor and shuttlecock with the others as circumstances demand. Coventry Patmore, who has annotated some of the letters, probably, as I think, in view of a projected biography of his father, has failed to penetrate this Jekyll-and-Hyde mystification, and attributes the letters of "the Editor of Blackwood's" to John Wilson.[1] The father shows no signs of having noted the duplicity, or rather triplicity, involved in the correspondence. Possibly it escaped him; or, understanding it, he may not have found in it so considerable a departure from correct usage as one hopes that our contemporaries would do. At any rate there is nothing to show that he appreciated the anomaly, a recognition of which would have enabled him to throw valuable light on the controversy which preceded the duel with which he was so unfortunately associated, and might have put a weapon into his hands for his own or his friends' defence, or even for carrying the war into the enemy's country.

How completely Coventry Patmore had misapprehended his father's relations with Blackwood is shown by the following letter, which however may be taken to indicate what would have been his own action under similar circumstances.

[1] William Blackwood's and John Wilson's handwritings are curiously similar, though they can be distinguished with certainty.

"Lymington, Jany. 5, 1896.

"My dear Gosse,

"I fear that I cannot give you any full history of my Father's connection with Blackwood's Magazine. I believe he began his career, as a contributor to periodical literature, in Blackwood—I think anonymously. I remember seeing long letters from Prof. Wilson, shewing that my father was a very highly valued contributor, until he declined to write any more, on account of an attack, I think on Wordsworth, which appeared in that Magazine. My father had no very deep political feelings, but strong personal feelings about literary men whom he admired. I never saw or heard of his notices of Hazlitt in Blackwood. My father was a very silent man, and never talked to me about his own work. After his refusal to write for Blackwood, the Magazine turned against him, and attacked him virulently."

But the father's attitude towards these affairs only affords a specially conspicuous example of a dissimilarity which is elsewhere widely apparent between his character and that of his son, and which shows itself scarcely to a less degree in thought and style. The father is often wearisomely diffuse, disjointed, and irrelevant, while the son's prose writings are always concise, pregnant, and to the point. P. G. Patmore, though the recipient of some of Charles Lamb's most witty and whimsical letters, seems to have shown himself, at least occasionally, deficient in sense of humour as well as in some of the qualities which humour implies; while Coventry, though displaying it in original forms not always too intelligible to strangers, was fully possessed of the gift. Nor does the father appear to have shown any of that self-centred strength of conviction and principle which was so conspicuous in the son. Besides his appreciations of Wordsworth, the only writing of his that seems to me to indicate any considerable foreshadowing of his son's qualities is "The Mirror of the

Months," which is full of delicate and sympathetic observations of the processes of nature. The essay on February in some respects anticipates the son's ode "St. Valentine's Day," while it embodies a tribute to the writer's wife which for warmth and delicacy of feeling seems worth transcribing.

"I have said that I designed to prove this to be the best of all possible months. Is the reader still incredulous as to its surpassing merits? Then be it known to him that I should insist on its supremacy, if it were only in virtue of one birthday which it includes: and one that the reader would never guess, for the best of all reasons. It is not that of 'the wisest of mankind,' Lord Bacon, on the 3rd: or of 'the starry Galileo' on the 19th: or of the 'matchless master of high sounds,' Handel, on the 24th. True, February does include all these memorable days, and let it be valued accordingly. But it includes another day, which is worth them all to me, since it gave to the world, the narrow world of some half-dozen hearts, one who is wiser in her simplicity than the first of the above-named, since the results of that wisdom are virtue and happiness; who is more far-darting in her mental glance than the second, inasmuch as an intuitive sentiment of the truth is more infallible than the clearest perception of it; and whose every thought and look and motion are more 'softly sweet' and musical than all the 'Lydian measures' of the third: and, deprived of whom, those who have once been accustomed to live within the light of her countenance would find all the wisdom of the first to be foolishness, all the stars of the second dark, and all the harmony of the third worse than discord."

(Coventry's first wife was also born in February, and father and son had the same reason for making this their favourite month). Perhaps a still greater resemblance between them is to be traced in the single letter to him from his father, which Coventry Patmore has preserved (pp. 36-42).

In this there seems to be something of the incisiveness, manliness, and wisdom, which might have been

looked for in the poet's father, and which, in so far as it represents his attitude in family relations, helps to account for the great respect which his son retained for his memory—a respect which his general character and literary performances alone could scarcely have earned.

Patmore used often to tell me that his father had no belief in the supernatural, and did not allow his wife to give their children any religious instruction. He seems nevertheless both to have had some kind of respect for the instruments of religion, and also to have been prepared to employ its sentiments for literary purposes. Patmore records in his autobiography (vol. ii. c. iv.) that his father had so much respect for the Bible as to be indignant if it were used as a seat (one cannot help being reminded of Dr. Johnson's "very religious man" who had not entered a church for many years, but never passed one without taking off his hat); and he seems to have perceived no inconsistency with his negative opinions in writing such a passage as the following:

> "Those who have seen this sight, of all the Charity Children within the Bills of Mortality assembled beneath the dome of St. Paul's, and heard the sounds of thanksgiving and adoration which they utter there, have seen and heard what is perhaps better calculated than any thing human ever was to convey to the imagination a faint notion of what we expect to witness hereafter, when the Hosts of Heaven shall utter, with *one voice*, hymns of adoration before the foot-stool of the Most High."[1]

Coventry Patmore used to be specially severe upon such purely artistic use of religious ideas; but he seems to have condoned much in his father's case—as to a kind and indulgent parent was no more than natural.

[1] "The Mirror of the Months," June.

The impression left by a study of P. G. Patmore's career and writings is that of honesty, amiability, tolerance, versatility; a judgment neither too keen, nor altogether unbiassed by personal partiality; a faculty of accurate observation unaccompanied by analytic power; a vanity scarcely perhaps exceptional in degree, but which he betrays with extreme *naïveté;* a style facile and fairly accomplished, but usually wanting in distinction. On the whole, though he seems to have been masterful in manner and often obstinate, one finds him a rather colourless and "invertebrate" personality, figuring, at any rate in earlier years, as the dandy, sportsman, cosmopolitan, and man of the world among literary men, and as the literary man in Society; reticent in talk and garrulous on paper; faithful (though not always to the point of chivalry) to his friends and never bitter to his enemies; but wanting in that "grit," consistency, and force of character, as well as in fixed principles of opinion and conduct, which were so characteristic of his more strong-natured son.

That he should ever have aroused such serious enmities as permanently to prejudice his son's career, seems to me improbable. Doubtless both his acts and writings exposed him to criticism, which, being in those days largely founded on political and literary faction, was unscrupulous and fierce. But the extant correspondence proves him to have kept his friends to the last, among them many of those most eminent in the literature of the day, and to have occupied a position among his contemporaries at least adequate to his intellectual claims.

The following is the only letter of condolence on his father's death, among the few which Coventry Patmore has preserved, that is of any interest.

"Bute Street, Old Brompton.
"17th March, 1856.

"My dear Sir,

"At length, after a partial recovery of health, I have heard of the death of your father. This was grievous news for me. Your father was among the oldest and most esteemed of my friends. Many happy hours have I passed with him in many places; at Highwood, Southampton St. (Fitzroy Square), Camberwell; here, in my diminutive house; at Colburn's, etc.; and never was our intercourse marred by any dispute, or, scarcely, by difference of opinion. To say this, is to eulogize myself. Your father was a good man—manly, straightforward, honest, truthful, friendly; as I know by many kindnesses he has rendered me by his pen, good-will, and cordial attentions. He was moreover, as we are all convinced, a person of rare intellectual endowments, and a companion in whose society it was impossible to pass a dull hour.

"I have endured dire sickness, and am still alive. My friend Patmore is gone! Gone to that eternal repose and happiness which no man merits more than he.

"This thought mitigates my deep sorrow for his loss.

"Yours, my dear Sir,
"Very faithfully,
"Chas. Ollier."

CHAPTER III

BOYHOOD

FROM early youth Coventry Patmore became his father's chief companion and literary pupil. P. G. Patmore's partiality for his eldest son, shown from the first, was considerably strengthened by a community of interests and taste which developed with the progress of years. Coventry's tenacity of purpose was noted by his brothers, one of whom long after related how, if they had formed a desire for some indulgence which had seemed to them unattainable, he would undertake to obtain it and almost invariably succeed, showing moreover no surprise at his success. His determination was scarcely less conspicuous than his father's desire to gratify his smallest wish. Almost as soon as he could read he began to show a love of letters, and while still quite a young child was constantly to be found in his father's library. Peter George Patmore always had plenty of books about him, especially the works of the English poets, in which he had marked his favourite passages. These volumes were eagerly devoured by the future poet, and no doubt he yielded somewhat to obvious temptation in limiting his reading to the selected portions. In after life there appeared to be evidence that such had been the case, as he would occasionally express a judgment on some poet's work founded only upon an isolated quotation. On the other hand, it is certain that he read thoroughly the works of such poets as were most congenial to him, and mastered comprehensively those of

Dante, Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. He used habitually to refer to his father any questions which had arisen in the course of his studies, and these were resolved for him; or if P. G. Patmore could not answer him at once, he would indicate the books in which the desired information could be found, and the two would together hunt up the necessary authorities. At one time he showed considerable talent for mathematics, and his father seems, not very wisely, to have made exhibitions to his friends of the child's proficiency. Coventry would be called down to the drawing-room and asked questions of some difficulty: he would retire into a corner of the room to reflect, and then return to the questioner with the answer ready.

Nor was it to books alone that his father introduced him. P. G. Patmore was devoted to the stage —was indeed at one time a theatrical critic of some note—and used frequently to take his sons with him to the play; when, if the piece were worthy of attention, Coventry would sit absorbed, as in a trance. The impression made on him in these early days by the drama was permanent, and to the end of his life he would discuss the merits of Kean, Macready, and Rachel. It is said that in recent years he decided not to see Signora Duse act, lest she should displace Madame Rachel from her position of prime favourite.

Coventry used also to accompany his father on his visits to his friends—among them to some leaders of literary Society. One of the houses to which he was often taken was the Basil Montagus'. Mrs. Basil Montagu made a strong impression on him; and even in later years it was as high a compliment as he could pay to a lady to remark that "she resembled Mrs. Basil Montagu." He used to say that she nearly always wore black velvet and lace, knowing that these suited her best. On one occasion,

having doubtless this lady in his mind, he astonished a girl, who asked him in what dress she should be married, by recommending "black velvet." Another house with which he was familiar in early years was Bryan Waller Procter's (Barry Cornwall), who had married Miss Skepper, Mrs. Montagu's daughter by a former marriage. The friendship with both Procter and his wife was maintained till death, and Coventry Patmore wrote the life of the poet at his widow's earnest request. It was to these two houses that he owed many of his principal friendships. It was certainly at the Procters' that he became acquainted with Monckton Milnes, probably also with Tennyson; and both of these associations had a considerable influence on his future life. Patmore also made the acquaintance of Leigh Hunt, and the following letter tells the tale of their first meeting in the very words in which Patmore was wont to relate it.

"Hastings, Feb. 6th, 1889.

"My dear Gosse,

"My first sight of Leigh Hunt—concerning which you enquire—was in this wise. I, being at 17 or 18 years of age, or perhaps younger, an admirer of the 'Indicator' and 'Rimini,' set off with a letter from my Father, an old friend of the Poet, informing him of my ambition to see him. Arriving at his house, a very small one in a small square somewhere in the extreme west, after a walk of some five or six miles, I was informed that the poet was at home, and asked to sit down until he came to me. This he did after I had waited in the little parlour at least two hours, when the door was opened and a most picturesque gentleman, with hair flowing nearly or quite to his shoulders, a beautiful velvet coat and a Vandyck collar of lace about a foot deep, appeared, rubbing his hands and smiling ethereally, and saying, without a word of preface or notice of my having waited so long, 'This is a beautiful world, Mr. Patmore!' I was so struck by this remark that it has eclipsed

all memory of what occurred during the remainder of my visit.

"Yours very truly,
"C. PATMORE."

Nevertheless, though he shared so many interests with his father, there were other matters of even more vital moment concerning which the two were entirely apart. Peter George Patmore, though an appreciative critic of poetry and a devoted admirer of Wordsworth, not merely as a poet but also as a philosophic teacher, disavowed (as has been already stated) all belief in the supernatural. His son seems from the first to have known that he could look for no sympathy from his father in those spiritual intuitions, religious aspirations, and vague yearnings after the ideal by which his early life was haunted. Of these he never made his father a confidant, but cherished them in secret, regarding them as landmarks in the progress of his inner life. P. G. Patmore however was too devoted to him and too observant to be altogether ignorant of the trend of his son's thoughts, which moreover discussions that must have followed upon their more mature and philosophic studies would have forced him to recognize.

It is possible to trace in Coventry Patmore's writings some memories of the transcendental impressions received in childhood. I have already recorded the effect produced on him in his earliest years by the beauty of flowers; and to the end of his life he would speak with rapture of his first sight of the sea. This occurred when, at the age of five or six years, he was taken by his parents to Hastings by coach. Some fifty years later he opened "Amelia," his favourite of all his poems, with the lines:

'Whene'er mine eyes do my Amelia greet,
It is with such emotion

> As when in childhood, turning a dim street,
> I first beheld the ocean."

This enthusiasm lasted through his life. His descriptive power, it seems to me, is never more strongly shown than when he is writing of the sea; and he revelled in the grand storms which occurred while he lived at Hastings. It is worth noting, though as a mere coincidence, that on the first day of his visit to Hastings he passed his future home "The Mansion," even then covered by the gigantic magnolia, and made up his mind that he would live there when he grew to be a man. His brother Gurney indeed quoted this as one of the many cases in which Coventry had realized his ambition by tenacity of purpose.

It is certain too that his earliest youth was not without foreshadowings of the feelings which came to be the main source of his poetic inspiration. The following passage, transcribed from his life of Barry Cornwall, is evidently written as much of himself as of his friend.

> "Those infantine passions, almost peculiar to and perhaps almost invariably occurring in the childhood of poets, are events of extreme importance in the history of their souls; and the world is probably indebted for one of its very highest blessings, namely, the imaginative glory which irradiates its idea of love, to the fact that poets, who are mainly the originators and promulgators of that idea, have had this singular capacity for loving, with the full vehemence of passion, in the ignorance and innocence of childhood; their manhood retaining, amid all its error and obscuration, the happy memory of that smokeless flame."

That in writing thus Patmore was drawing on his own experience is no mere inference. He used often, in intimate talk, to dwell upon his almost infantile loves, and describe the passionate ardour which perfect innocence served only to intensify. As he grew

THE MANSION, HASTINGS.

Drawn by T. Raffles Davison.

older the idea of love became more and more the dominant inspiration of his life, and it was in early years that he received, as he believed, a supernatural mandate to "sing the praises of nuptial love." I cannot find that Patmore ever defined the date of this experience; but in a letter written to Mr. Monckton Milnes, not long after the publication of the "Betrothal,"[1] he implies that the subject of the poem had occupied his thoughts for fourteen years. If this may be taken to indicate the time of the behest, it must have been received when he was about seventeen.[2]

During the whole of Coventry's boyhood—indeed until the financial catastrophe which befell them in 1845—the Patmores were in easy circumstances. They had a town and a country house—the former in Southampton Street, Fitzroy Square, the latter at Highwood Hill, some three or four miles beyond Hendon—and, except for the time spent in Paris, Coventry's youth was passed between these homes. In the country, the love for external nature, of which the foundation had no doubt been laid by the great-uncle, Robert Stevens, was developed under the influence of his father, who shows in "The Mirror of the Months" the close observation of a true disciple of Wordsworth. When in London, Coventry studied various subjects, as the humour took him. For a time he dreamed of becoming an artist, and in 1838 was awarded the silver palette of the Society of Arts.

[1] He writes: "There is fourteen years' conscientious work in the book, which cannot be said of any Poem since the 'Excursion' and its 'Prelude.'"

[2] A friend considers the following coincidence worthy of mention. About the time when the English Legislature was, by the divorce laws, relaxing the marriage tie, Patmore was devoting his genius to idealizing it and asserting its permanence in time and eternity; the antidote being thus produced *pari passu* with the disease.

This enthusiasm however soon left him, though it partly survived in a genuine love for pictures.

In 1839 Coventry Patmore was sent to Paris. He writes:

"When I was about fifteen[1] years old, my father sent me to a school—a branch of the Collège de France—at St. Germains, in order to improve my French; but as he stipulated that I should have an apartment of my own, and should live with the Head-master's family, learning from private tutors, and not in the classes, I did not mix with the other boys, nor learn to talk very fluently. I used to spend all my Sundays at Mrs. Charles Gore's. She had a fine apartment in the Place Vendôme, and, on Sundays, her rooms were full of the best literary and political society of Paris. I was too young to profit, as I might have done later, by these opportunities. I was very much in love with her daughter, afterwards Lady Edward Thynne. I was a very shy boy, and she used to snub me unmercifully. I learned more German than French during the six months I spent at this school, and I became a pretty good fencer."

The time he spent there was the only period in his life during which he was under regular tuition; and though it may be supposed that the discipline was advantageous, he never became reconciled to any form of academic life, and to the end maintained that home education was, when circumstances allowed, generally preferable to that of schools. The following letter from his father, the only one he has preserved, throws some light upon his Paris life, while it is evidence of the wise and thoughtful sympathy with which P. G. Patmore entered into all that concerned his eldest and favourite son.

"London, Oct. 31, 1839.

"My Dear Coventry,

"I am so very much pressed with the *arrears* which have accumulated during my month's holiday, that I have

[1] He was actually sixteen.

been obliged to delay replying to your letter, and must even now do so in much greater haste than I could wish. But if I could put it off till I can write at leisure, you may chance to be put to *extreme* inconvenience—in the matter, I mean, of your *nether* garments—so I write at once, without its being possible for me to *re*-read your last epistle, with a view to any questions in it that I may have forgotten. All you have to do about the trousers is, to order (at any place that Mr. Cliftie may recommend to you) such a pair as you like—dark and very warm—and not of an expensive material—but make an express *agreement* as to price. They will not require payment—or if they do you had better pay with your own money—unless you like to ask Mr. Cliftie to do so. But as you will at all events stay a second three months, they will be glad enough to let you have what you want, till I have a safer opportunity of sending a remittance than a mere letter would be. The *hat*—(if you *must* have one before the spring—though I cannot but think you might manage without) you had better get at Paris.

"I am quite satisfied with the *style* and *composition* of your letter and *you* therefore have no occasion to be dissatisfied with them. The only exception to this is, that you do not punctuate—and *consequently* that you give the *appearance* (but nowhere the reality) of running your sentences into one another—simply for want of the *full stop* and the *capital letter* which should in every case follow. With *this* exception there is nothing in your letters that should give you any fear about writing to Mrs. Gore, or anybody else, whenever you have occasion to do so—though the only occasion you could or can have of writing to Mrs. G. would be that of a few simple lines of civility, to avoid the apparent *in*civility of sending my packets to her in a blank envelope, for her to *guess* who they came from.

"I did not mistake you on the subject of Don Juan—I understood the impression you spoke of to have been made by the 2 verses you referred to. But you did not speak of any *other* impression, received from other parts of that extraordinary work—as wicked in most parts as it is beautiful in some—wicked, however, only because it was expressly *intended* to do mischief. Your opinions about Chesterfield are quite just, and so are those about Paul and Virginia. The 'Chaumière Indienne' of the same writer is still more beautiful, in the same way, you should read it as soon as

you can. But pray, as you have little time at present for *miscellaneous* reading, be *select* in what you do read (if the phrase is not a bull)—and let it consist exclusively of works on which *Time* (the only infallible critic) has put his stamp. The opinion of *yourself* (which follows what you say about D. Juan)—viz., 'that no work in print could do you any harm'—I hope even by *this* time you have got rid of—so utterly and almost ridiculously, and so dangerously false is it. If nothing can do you *harm*, by parity of reasoning, nothing can do you *good*. It is true the happiest of all arts is that of 'turning diseases to commodities'—of turning evil to good. But it is the *rarest* of all arts—and assuredly not the one in which you have taken your Degree.

"Taking the points of your letter *seriatim* (for I have turned to it—instead of writing in a hurry and at random—as I first hinted that I must)—I hope there is a *little* hyperbole in your expression of the pleasure you receive at the 'Place.' If your visits there are 'necessaries of life' to you, what will you do presently, when they must cease?—Pray beware on this point—for *I* cannot afford to lose you whatever you may think of losing yourself. On this point I will only remind you how *more than* dangerous—how surely fatal it is, to set our inclinations too fixedly on objects which we are certain of being soon called upon to forego. It gives me great pleasure to find that your *first* introduction to that world in which you may soon have to move alone has been productive of such gratification to you—but let me beseech you to wear the pleasant and sweet-smelling garland *loosely* about your head, lest, when you are called upon to lay it aside, you may not, in plucking it off, (like Iago's wit) 'pluck forth brains and all.'—Verbum sap!

"You are quite right as to the *next* point in your letter. I *do* (as you anticipate) most earnestly desire you at once to abstain from staying at home so long at a time. It seems to me from what you say, that you sit up much too late, and get up much too early—and do not take one-tenth part enough exercise. You *must* be in *the open air* at least *two hours every day*. You do not tell me anything specific about fencing and dancing, each of which would go far to remedy the evil just alluded to. Pray tell me what you are doing in them. Neither do you tell me anything about *your friend* Alexander. Who and *what* is he? and *why* do you like him? or *do* you *still* like him?—Your reason for *dis-*

liking the other person alluded to in your letter is a most valid one,—always provided *it exist.* But are you sure of this?—or may not your deficient knowledge of the language have led you to do the party injustice?—You cannot by any possibility over-rate the fault of which you speak. But I doubt if you have not mistaken the fact of its existence.

"Nothing gives me more pleasure than what you feel about Miller and his book—and consequently what you feel about those simplicities of Nature of which his book is so pleasing a transcript. While you preserve these two loves —the love of Nature and the love of Books—you may contrive (if needful) to dispense with all *other* loves, and to set at defiance all that is the opposite of love. I will seek an opportunity of sending you the Book as soon as possible—but must not send it thro' the Ambassador, unless you could learn *most unequivocally* that it will not be deemed by Mrs. Gore in the slightest degree troublesome.

"George goes on Saturday next. My feelings at parting from him teach me that I am not so strong as I was (about the regions of the *heart* I mean). If anything should happen to him I shall not forgive myself for yielding (for the first time in my life I believe) to other judgments than my own on a point on which my own was sure to be best, because it grew out of the strongest interest and the deepest feelings. In fact, nothing but *his* apparently irrepressible desire to go —added to the peculiar constitution of his health—could have induced me to part from him. He shall write you a few words with this. In the mean time, I verily believe that *even now* I should stop his going, if it were not for the (unaccountable) delight that he himself seems to take in the idea of taking leave of all of us, it may be for ever! Your presentiment about his squirrel has already come true. It died some days ago.

"Touching poetry,—if you have any of it in you it will be pretty sure to come out—whether you will or no—but do not *entice* it out—for of all follies there is none so foolish in its results as the habit of mere *verse* writing. There is no harm in the Charivari man's phrenological prognostic about your head. But if there is anything in it (in the *prognostic* I mean)—or if you *think* there is anything in it—it is a reason the more for eschewing verse-making: for I verily believe there never yet was a *poetical* genius that was

not cursed rather than blessed by the possession—unless it was Shakespeare.

"Your fun about the Stevens is very good—but *rather* ill-natured—or rather it displays in rather too marked a form that 'turn for satire' of which you spoke in your previous letter—and which (for anybody but a profest *satirist*) is about the most unhappy turn any one can possess. Your dramatic 'situation' on the 'Place' was worth the price it cost—that of the fingers of your glove—and considering that the demolition was at your own cost, I have abstained (as you desire) from the hysterics. By-the-bye, your next 'situation' (at the 2 fcs. Restaurant) mulcted of half your dinner, was too serious for a joke. The only way in which I can account for your submitting to it, is, that the scene in the 'Place' had taken away your appetite.

"All that I have to complain of in your letter (barring the 'turn for satire' in the part touching your late visitors) is the handwriting—which is execrable. If it were any body else's but yours I would not have even *attempted* to read it at any price. Pray reform this. As I was walking along the street the other day, I set about manufacturing *impromptu* jokes for your especial delectation, and one of them arose out of the above error: (an example of turning diseases to commodities) I imagined somebody to ask me if you had improved in your handwriting—and my reply was—'No—quite the reverse—his *hand* now is so bad that it looks exactly as if he had put his foot in it.' No great thing, this,—you will say. Another that I constructed on the occasion is better. In reference to the present *rage* for philosophical improvements in the acts of life, some one was to observe to you on the danger incurred by crossing the Alps in winter in the unwieldy Diligences (as high as a house) during a thunder storm—and you were to add 'Oh there 's no danger from lightning, for they never travel without a *conductor*.'

"By-the-bye, you never tell me what you *do* in Paris when you go there—whether you stay there all day—whether you *dine* (or merely *call*) at the 'Place'—if not, *where* and *how* you dine—&c. Not that I am *curious* about your proceedings at the 'Place'—but (shall I say it) I am rather *anxious*. And this, not so much from what you say, as from what you do *not* say. Whenever Telemachus was *silent* to his mentor, there was always some cause for fear to

both. Do not suppose that I (*your* mentor—if you will let me be so) have any fear that the 'Place' should prove to you a Calypso's Island. But it *may* prove a still more dangerous place—a Prospero's Island—without a Prospero to watch over the welfare of its inhabitants. You will tell me in reply that it is indeed a spot

'full of sweet airs
That give delight and *hurt not;*

and that its Miranda *is* a Miranda—and what would I desire more?—Yes—my dear little boy—but *you* are not a *Ferdinand.* But (again you reply) can evil come out of good?—Yes—the greatest of evils out of the greatest of goods:—always understanding the axiom of *now*—middle of the 19th century. Still, be assured, no evil can come to *you*, even out of evil, much less out of good, while you lay bare all your thoughts and feelings to *me*, and listen to mine in return, as to those of one who would fain be to you a Mentor and a Ulysses in one: and believe me there is no wisdom so trustworthy as that which is the offspring of love. 'The proof of the pudding is in the eating.' Mentor used sometimes (not often) to *preach* to Telemachus; but I never preach to you, and never shall: though I am by no means sure that I may not some day or other—if you *should* happen to be cast away on an enchanted Island like that of Calypso, and wish to take up your abode there,—watch an opportunity of inveigling you to the top of a convenient cliff, and push you into the sea, jump in after you, at the imminent peril of both our precious lives: which is more than Mentor did for his—Telemachus—for, being an immortal, he (and he) knew that there was no danger for either of them.

"Meantime I am
"Ever yours
"P. G. P."

"P.S.—About the trousers, what I mean is that you should request Mr. Cliftie to let the tailor know that they will be paid for by the first opportunity of remitting you money—that is if you object to pay for them out of your own. I hope you have put on your winter flannels. If you want anything of an outer coat or jacket kind warmer than that you have, enquire what is fitting, and let me know in your

next letter what it will cost &c. qy. a sort of pilot coat?—I sent you a Paper some days ago, with some rhapsodizing of mine about Nickleby. Say if you got it and read it. I will send you another next Saturday, with some more about Jack Sheppard.

"If you hear, or can learn, anything more about the Stevens's plans, let me know. I shall not be very sorry if they don't fix upon St. G. By-the-bye, you have told me nothing of anybody to whom Dr. B. has introduced you.

"Again adieu

"P. G. P."[1]

Mrs. Gore had long been an intimate friend and literary ally of P. G. Patmore. In a letter written to him by Mr. Plumer Ward, printed in "My Friends and Acquaintance," the writer speaks of Mrs. Gore as "your lady-love." The daughter, for whom Coventry was, as his father detects, conceiving a boyish passion, was not long after married to Lord Edward Thynne. Though the affection was of the nature of "calf-love" (Coventry Patmore was but sixteen and the lady a year or two older), it made an impression on him which he never lost. It was, as it were, his matriculation in the school of love, and initiated him in the mysteries of emotion and feeling which were the foundation of his later poetry. It may be noted too that this experience is apparently coincident in time with the supernatural behest which he believed had been given him, and the inspiration may have been connected with this passion. Years afterwards he found a picture which seemed to resemble Miss Gore, and had it set in a frame with shutters. It used to hang in the drawing-room of the house in which he lived with his first wife, and, if visitors were curious to know what was behind the shutters, Patmore would tell them that it was "the very first 'Angel.'"

[1] On the back of this is the letter from the grandmother given in Chapter I., pp. 3, 4.

It is worthy of remark that "Vaughan," the hero of "The Angel," giving a catalogue of the scenes of his immature loves, in which Patmore has at least in one case introduced a personal allusion, excludes Paris—"In Paris *none*." His life there was not a happy one. He was too shy to enjoy the society to which he was introduced, disliked the course of study, and retained throughout his life a strong prejudice against France; and the exclusion quoted is no doubt intended as an expression of this antipathy.

The "Charivari man" alluded to is obviously a phrenologist. There was, I am told, one of some eminence practising in Paris about this time, whose name was Deville. This was not the only occasion on which Patmore consulted a phrenologist. Some years later, as he used to tell, he and Tennyson went together to visit one in London, who had no means of knowing who they were. He pronounced that they both possessed all the poetic faculties, but added, with regard to Patmore, that he was equally qualified to succeed in business. This opinion made a considerable impression on Patmore, who was thereafter always a believer in phrenology. The "Charivari man" seems to have detected the poetic gift alone.

It seems too from this letter that Coventry Patmore had already made some essays in poetry. The father advised more wisely then than later, when he hustled his son somewhat prematurely into publication. "The Place" is, of course, Mrs. Gore's house: "George" is the second son: "the Stevens" are probably an uncle and aunt, and "St. G." is St. Germains. To all other allusions the clue is lost.

On his return to London in 1840 Coventry took more seriously to writing verses, and it is known that "The River" and "The Woodman's Daughter"

were composed about this time.[1] His father had his poems put in type with a view to publication ; but the poetic impulse was not lasting, and was shortly superseded by an enthusiasm for science. P. G. Patmore, ever indulgent of his son's fancies, fitted up a laboratory for him in a disused kitchen in the London house, where Coventry worked incessantly. The results of his study are contained in a note-book still preserved. He and his friends believed that he had made discoveries of some value, an opinion which could be tested only by a retrospective appraisement which it would be difficult or impossible to obtain. His mathematical and scientific work was combined with a study of philosophy, especially that of Plato, and of theology, which was taking more and more complete possession of his mind as his years advanced.

It is also clear that he was about this time engaged in a close study of poetry, and especially of Shakespeare. There can be no doubt that his father's guidance in such matters was of great advantage to him. P. G. Patmore was, as we have seen, a true lover of Wordsworth, and in criticising his work anticipates much of the best appreciation of our own day. His judgment is scarcely less sound, though less fully developed, in the case of Byron, Shelley, and Coleridge. Now and then he seems to overvalue the work of those who were his personal friends —of Leigh Hunt for example; and in this case his son must have caught or inherited his partiality. Coventry Patmore used to praise "Rimini" more highly than he probably would have done but for some such influence.

[1] In the "Præ-Raphaelite Diaries," lately published, there is an entry for Nov. 7, 1849: "He (Patmore) himself spent about a year (from the age of sixteen to seventeen) on *The River*, with which, and *The Woodman's Daughter*, he is contented in point of finish. *Lilian* and *Sir Hubert* were written in a great hurry for the publisher."

He has recorded that "at the age of sixteen" he had written the essay which years afterwards appeared in "The Germ," in which he endeavoured to prove that Macbeth had discussed with his wife the idea of usurping the monarchy before his interview with the witches. This is a remarkable performance, especially for a mere boy, both in close reasoning and in clearness of expression. He seems indeed to prove his point, if it be assumed that Shakespeare wrote nothing which was not meant to be pressed to its extreme logical conclusion; while the style in which the paper is written is remarkably mature, failing only in the flow and facility which he acquired in later years.

Of his progress in religious thought it is unnecessary to speak, as he has recorded this fully in the autobiography given vol. ii. c. iv. It is clear that about this time he contemplated taking orders in the English Church, and his father looked forward to sending him and his brother Gurney to Cambridge. This idea was however before long given up: Patmore felt some difficulty in accepting the Thirty-nine Articles, and was gradually coming to realize that poetry was his true vocation.

The following extract from his father's book, "Chatsworth," gives the best available picture of Coventry in boyhood. It is no doubt to some extent an ideal portrait, but there is little in it which does not receive support from fact or from legitimate inference. It is however as was natural, somewhat deficient on the side of religious thought.

"The Boy Poet.

"Observe the youth who is seated in the deep recess of yonder window, withdrawn and apart from all that brilliant company—unknowing, for the moment, of everything in the wide world but his own thoughts, and unknowing even of them but as faint and vague echoes and reflections of

those *feelings* which make up the sum of a boy-poet's life and soul. See! his lithe, fragile form is bending over a book, that is spread open on his knees, his head drooping towards it like a plucked flower. The pale face is resting on the clasped hand, over which, and all round the small, exquisitely modelled head, fall heavy waves of auburn hair, concealing all but one pale cheek—pale and cold as marble, but smooth and soft as a girl's.

"Dead to all the brilliant nothings that are passing around him, the boy-poet has fallen upon some passage of his (just at present) sole idol in the temple of poetry, Milton, and is either lapped in the Elysium of its divine music, or lost in the mazes of its marvellous imagery, or transfixed by the flaming sword of its majestic eloquence.

* * * * *

"Last year he owned no mistresses but the exact sciences: admitted of no virtue or verity but what resolved itself into 'the loves of the triangles'; and had very nearly squared the circle! The year before, he had dived so far into the heart and mystery of matter, that the Philosopher's stone was within his mind's grasp, and the Elixir Vitæ was a thing more than 'probable to thinking.' The year before that, Art was his only idolatry—a marble statue or a canvas Madonna his only 'beauteous and sublime of human life.'—At present, as we have hinted, he is a poet. We would not swear that next year he will not be a person of sound common sense; the year after that, a debater at the Cambridge Union; the year afterwards a senior Wrangler; and——

"Oh, most lame and impotent conclusion; he will, in all human probability, signalize his arrival at 'years of discretion' by a Tory harangue from a popular hustings, or a Whig article in the 'Edinburgh Review.'

"We have said that Milton was, for the moment, the sole idol of our boy-poet. But even Milton he regarded, not as a poet, but only as the nearest approach to the great poetical archetype existing in his own mind; and, if he worshipped him, it was *as* an idol, not as a God. Compared with all other poets (so called) he regarded Milton as a demi-god compared with mere men. But tried by the test of the poetry born of his own dreams, Milton himself 'came tardy off.'

"We have said, also, that just at present he was a poet. But it was in feeling and aspiration only, not in act. He thought of poetry as of a thing so utterly ethereal and of the mind, that he scarcely regarded it *in esse* at all—only *in posse;* a thing to be created, or educed out of created things, in the fulness of time, but not as yet a living entity —a faith, not a fact—an aspiration of

'The prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come;'

not an accomplished purpose. He believed in it, as he believed in the ultimate perfectibility of man, and that they would come together—or rather, that each would necessarily bring or include the other. He looked upon Plato as the nearest to a poet of any human being that ever lived; partly because he never *wrote* a line of poetry, but chiefly because he excluded poets (so called) from his ideal of a Republic: for our boy-poet held that all *written* poetry, even the highest and purest, does but lower and debase, rather than exalt and refine, that idea of THE POET, which he believed in, as he believed in the idea of the Godhead—both being conceptions incapable of expression by words or even of thoughts—only of being *felt.* Poetry was to him not merely 'a light that never was on sea or land,' but a light that never was at all;—a thing TO BE: 'the all-hail hereafter!' the great problem of human nature,—not to be solved, but in the immortal courts of Heaven.

"Our boy-dreamer believed that if any writer of recent times had obtained glimpses of what poetry is, and had succeeded in putting them into words, it was Wordsworth; and *he* only in his 'Ode on Immortality.'

"This, he thought, went nearer to solve the problem of poetry than anything else that man had ever put into words: and he reverenced Wordsworth accordingly. But Wordsworth's writings in general he looked upon as something very like an antagonism to Poetry—an Egotism, instead of an Idealism—the petty thoughts and feelings and associations of an *individual* man, as opposed to the one great conception of our human nature, as emanating from, and existing in, its Creator.

"Consistently with this idea, if he had been called upon to embody Poetry in effigy, through the medium of Paint-

ing or Sculpture, he would have given it a form, not of Apollonian beauty, and immortal youth, but of *infancy*—the *face* alone of a sleeping infant—sleeping, but dreaming; —an infant's face in the sky, dreaming, amidst the 'clouds of glory' which its Creator had breathed about it, and which the first touch of earth would melt and dissipate."

CHAPTER IV.

EARLY POEMS.

COVENTRY PATMORE had before long finally abandoned the idea of taking Orders, and had exhausted his enthusiasm for science. The publication, in 1842, of Tennyson's collected poems re-awakened the poetic ambition which had for some time lain dormant, and he was encouraged by his father and his father's friends to enter definitely on the career of a poet. He was taken to read before P. G. Patmore's literary allies such poems as he had already written. As early as 1842 Laman Blanchard writes: "My strong and clear conviction of the extreme beauty and finish of what I heard read last night remains this morning undiminished. They will bear thinking over, and the impression they make is a lasting one I am sure. Nothing that Tennyson has done need be despaired of." There was however scarcely sufficient verse already written to form a volume: Coventry was urged by his father to supplement it (see note p. 44), and the little volume was launched in 1844.

These earlier poems seem to have made rather an unusual amount of stir: at any rate, possibly owing to the father's literary connection, they were voluminously reviewed; and Patmore, as a very young author would be likely to do, has preserved a perfect sheaf of cuttings from contemporary papers. These are interesting mainly as showing the manner of criticism in vogue more than half a century ago. They vary from extreme admiration to utter con-

tempt, the one being often as little based on sound judgment as the other.

"The Spectator" of the day falls foul of the subject of "Sir Hubert" in utter ignorance that the story is derived from Boccaccio. For this blunder "Punch" makes fun of "The Spectator," at the same time giving cordial encouragement to the young poet. A considerable number of the critics endeavour to trace Patmore's poetical genealogy. To one he seems to write "on the exact pattern of Tennyson": to another he is the descendant of the "Lake" poets, especially Wordsworth, through Tennyson: another holds that he is obviously an imitator of Browning "in his more intelligible moods"; while Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, and "Keate's" (*sic*) seem to another all to have a share in his parentage. There is safety in numbers; and any one who had read (as, of course, no one except the poet and his family did) all these multifarious and contradictory endeavours to derive him, might have come to the conclusion that some of Patmore's characteristics were conceivably his own. Strange to say, Coleridge is almost the only modern poet, according to these critics, whom he has failed to take for his model; whereas he is probably the only one from whom any very distinct influence will be recognized by the critical reader.

The general impression produced by these critiques is that they are already somewhat out of date. It is clear that the new ideas of poetic art, which had been inaugurated by Wordsworth and Coleridge and which Tennyson was strengthening and confirming, had not yet been assimilated by the average critic, and that any writer who was truly modern had still to contend against a weight of prejudice.

The following passage from "The Critic" seems to me amusing enough to be worth transcribing:

"But if nature hath forbidden him to be a poet, the sooner he finds out his incapacity the better for himself and his friends; for it may save to society a valuable worker in some other walk, while it spares to critics the irksome toil of fault-finding, to himself the pain of being compelled to hear unwelcome truths, and to his friends may-hap the cost of maintaining a lank-ribbed author and a bare-footed family."

The style of criticism indicated is fortunately obsolete; not more so perhaps than the idea of maintaining a family on the proceeds of poetry. On the whole, roughly weighing the friendly notices against the unfriendly, one finds a reasonable excess on the side of encouragement, though it can scarcely be imagined that Patmore was greatly impressed by the discernment of those who sat in judgment on his earliest work.

It is almost needless to say that "Blackwood's" review does not figure among these cuttings. This notice ("Blackwood," August, 1844) is one of the most savage that ever appeared in "Maga" even in its unregenerate days. It is probable that an attitude of fierce hostility would have been assumed whatever had been the quality of the poems. As the son of "Tims," the quondam contributor to "Blackwood," of the second of Scott—who was actually Christie's, originally Lockhart's, and essentially "Maga's" antagonist—of the friend of Leigh Hunt, Keats, and Hazlitt, Coventry Patmore would have been sure in any case to receive short shrift from the staff of the magazine.

It is clear from a letter written by Laman Blanchard to P. G. Patmore that both considered the writer of this article to be attacking the father through the son. Blanchard writes as follows:

"Injury it cannot do except to your own feelings, which

I allow for being ten times stronger, of course, than if you were ostensibly the person assailed."

This letter, of which the original is not to be found among P. G. Patmore's papers, is printed in "My Friends and Acquaintance," with an obvious error of date, 1843 for 1844. I gather from it that P. G. Patmore had suspected Colburn, with whom he had quarrelled (see p. 7), of having instigated the review; a suspicion which Blanchard, who had succeeded him as Colburn's editor of the "New Monthly," is able authoritatively to remove.

P. G. Patmore is evidently quite at fault as to the authorship, which is still to some extent matter for conjecture. The article has, I believe, been attributed to John Wilson ("Christopher North"), who subsequently apologized for it. But in the first place, the apology, according to Coventry Patmore's own account, need not be taken to imply (nor did Patmore himself so take it) that Wilson had actually written the critique: he merely regretted that it had appeared in "Blackwood." In the second place, Wilson does not seem to have been writing for "Blackwood" in 1844: in his biography no articles are assigned to him during that year. Thirdly, the manner of the article is not his; and the character of the parodies, as well as the illustrative allusions, point altogether in another direction. There are strong indications of a different hand, that of a usually kindly critic, whose manner the article fits in all respects but that of virulence. But such virulence was more common and perhaps less culpable in those days; and the writer may have written under an editorial command to "lay it on." I incline to think that the hand is the hand of ———, but the voice is the voice of "Maga."

The article in question ends thus:

"This is the life into which the slime of the Keateses (*sic*) and Shelleys of former times has fecundated. The result was predicted a quarter of a century ago in this magazine—nothing is so tenacious of life as the spawn of frogs—the fry must become extinct in him. His poetry (thank Heaven!) cannot corrupt into anything *worse* than itself."

The review is however scarcely less clever than it is savage and unscrupulous. The defects so relentlessly castigated are for the most part real and obvious: the merits are of course entirely ignored. But, as is often the case, the critic's spite "o'erleaps itself" by associating with the poet in common condemnation the names of "Keates" and Shelley. "Blackwood" was still impenitent in regard to Keats, and the writer must, even to readers of that day, have seriously discounted his condemnation of Coventry Patmore by thus striking wildly and needlessly extending the range of his malignity.

I think however that any one who is at the trouble of reading this most unfair critique will scarcely fail to observe how very many defects in the poems should have been obvious to the young poet's friends, and how easily the worst of them might have been remedied. The verses, mostly written by him when a mere boy, were forced into publication by the father, himself a professed critic and a dabbler in poetry;[1] had been read certainly to Leigh Hunt and Laman

[1] In his copy of the 1853 edition of "Tamerton Church Tower," P. G. Patmore has written the following note in pencil, referring to this passage from "The Yew-Berry," one of the early poems reprinted:

> "Oh, ghastly corpse of Love so slain! It makes the world
> its hearse."

"This is by far the greatest thing he has yet done. *There is nothing* in the 'Ancient Mariner' so fine." Most readers will find here evidence that paternal partiality had overborne the annotator's usually sound judgment.

Blanchard, probably to Barry Cornwall and others of standing in the literary world. It seems astonishing that the young writer's attention should not have been called by some of these to the more salient faults, and that the father and his friends should have shown such lack of discernment and prudence as to allow the volume to face the critics in so vulnerable a state.

It is curious that it should be stated that these poems were received with general disfavour. On the contrary, the balance of opinion shown in the various reviews is, as I have said, distinctly encouraging: but it is not perhaps unnatural that severity should have had a longer life than kindliness—"Do roses stick like burrs?" The appreciation which the young poet received privately was however far more judicious and helpful than that which appeared in print. It would, I think, be difficult to find wiser or more sympathetic advice than is contained in the following letter written to Coventry Patmore by Sir E. Bulwer Lytton, which too is specially interesting in that it distinctly connects the poems, as to character and method, with the principles adopted later by the Præ-Raphaelite painters with whom Patmore was subsequently associated. He however was never himself conscious of any such similarity.

"DEAR SIR,[1]

"Your little volume has reached me only within the last few days—and I gratefully sit down to thank you for the extreme pleasure I have derived from the Perusal.—

"Your pages abound with unmistakable testimonials of no common genius;—not one which does not proclaim the mind and heart of a Poet.—I honestly, and without compliment, think the promise you hold out to us—is perfectly startling, both from the luxuriance of your fancy, and the

[1] This letter is printed exactly as it was written in spelling and punctuation.

subtle and reflective inclinations of your intellect. It rests with yourself alone to fulfil that promise,—for no less honestly, I may say, tho' with respect, that I doubt if very large and material alterations in the faculty we call taste, are not essentially necessary to secure you the Wide Audience and the permanent Fame which must root themselves in the universal sympathies, and the household affections of men. —As yet you seem to me to lean more towards that class of Poets who are Poets to Poets—not Poets to the Multitude. —Such were men like Peile Carew,[1] Herbert, perhaps even Cowley—and in later days—Coleridge, Shelley, Keates, and one or two living writers I could name. These are writers whom the young Poets are apt to over-estimate—and, without imitating them precisely, their vein runs too much into similar channells—In Poetry as in life there must be something Practical kneaded up with the ideal—in order for our work to become solid.—However costly the materials for building, we cannot well dispense with cement. This practical power it is which the greatest Poets—(and those below the greatest who have been most popular, and cherished), eminently possess. It is a something wholly independent of what the Germans call "form"—and should please and interest even if turned into prose and into any language—The "form" shows the Poetical gift and the substance is more than the Gift—it is the Manhood or the Godhead behind it.—I should earnestly recommend to a poet like yourself, the diligent cultivation of the *constructive* faculty, that which gives strong human interest to all that it builds up—I do not mean merely construction of tale or story or plot—For Pope, who has little of this kind of constructiveness, still never loses sight of the rarer and subtler division of the faculty—and constructs his very didactics and moralizing upon a scheme that secures very wide interest and very pleased and facile attention.

The Poet, in indulging fancy, must remember that it is not by fancy alone that he secures us—His strong hold is the heart—and when he deserts that, he must hold the firmer to our understanding or common sense.—Mere Fancy writes on Water.—

With regard to form. While you seem to me to excell, and perhaps to exuberate in original felicity of phrase and

[1] This should be "Peele, Carew."

expression I doubt if you have attended sufficiently to variety and sustained music in rythm. Most of your poems are really in almost the same metre, and that one which has too fatal a facility for that enjoyment in art which is derived from difficulty overcome, and which makes us prefer the marble statue to the wax figure. It is little more than the Printer's division of one line into two that distinguishes the metre of Lilian from that of the River.—In Hubert, and others, the running the sense into lines over the rhym, is not only too often, but to my poor judgment, too inartistically indulged.—These you call trifles, but Form is never a trifle and while you obviously over cultivate form to a degree that some Enemies might call affectation, you also permit yourself a luxurent carelessness in it, which (pardon me) is a worse affectation of the two. Nor do I like a repeated indulgence of that extra-plainness which Wordsworth introduced for a scientific purpose but which he and others have strangely abused, which introduces into the midst of the eloquence *natural* and becoming to the dullest of us when elevated by sentiment and feeling—a triteness that jars upon all the strings the Poet has just awakened.—Such lines for instance as :

> 'Endues the chairs and tables
> With a disagreeable life,'

might furnish critics not disposed to be unfair with much that might help to thwart popularity by ridicule.—All simplicity that fails to *touch* us by being simple, appears but conceit—This is what we understand by the slang word 'Cockneyism.'

"A more material point which I strongly urge you to reconsider is in that part of your Art which relates to *details*. —It seems to me that in common with Tennyson, you cultivate details to the injury of the broad clear whole.—The River is indeed a most exquisite poem—but it is by the details alone that you make it so.—Had you paid equal attention to the elaboration of a great conception—[in] which, after all, the details would have stood out clear, single and luminous at the close—you would have tripled the beauty and popularity of the piece. On the other hand, you have shown how well you can manage this art of detail in Sect. VI. of Hubert,—in which line after line of

that swelling and most beautiful passage, conduces almost like a gradual Drama, to the burst at the close—the appearance of Mabel.—This passage is, with one or two slight exceptions, deserving of the highest and most unqualified admiration.

"From all I can conjecture from your poetry and your youth, I should say that you have only to aspire to be a Poet *to the Masses*—to be more practical in that sense of the word in which it was applied by Goethe to Schiller, to cultivate the power of enchaining human interest, to bring down your fancy to a level with the Heart and understanding—in order to achieve a very high destiny.—And it is this belief that has made me thus volunteer criticisms perhaps erroneous, and certainly to be received with some suspicion as coming from one extremely biassed by taste against the more modern style of verse-composition—but which are in fact, the highest compliment I can pay to your genius, and my faith in its future fruits—if you will resolutely prefer the fruits to the flowers—

"Believe me, dear Sir,
"Very faithfully,
"E. B. LYTTON.

"Malvern, July 27th, 1844."

Coventry Patmore came before long to see most clearly the defects of these early efforts; even to depreciate them unduly. He speaks of them as "trash" and "rubbish," written under pressure from his father; alludes to them in a letter to his friend Mr. Sutton (printed in vol. ii.) as an object lesson in faults of style and subject; and also, when he came to finally select from and revise them for republication, he seems to have cared so little for them that, though usually a most accurate castigator of his own work, he has allowed one or two most obvious errors to pass his censorship.[1] But whatever were their merits or demerits, these poems had a most important influence on his career, and for this

[1] Cf. note to "Amelia," p. 190, single volume edition, 1878.

reason they are dwelt on more fully here than would otherwise have seemed necessary.

For besides the more solid advantages which, as we shall see, were gained by them at a later date, Coventry Patmore at once became "Somebody," and was admitted on his own merits to literary circles, which he had previously entered only as his father's son. Immediately after the publication Lady Blessington writes to P. G. Patmore as follows:

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"I congratulate you on the charming poems of your Son. They are indeed beautiful, and fresh, and original as beautiful. My friend, Mr. Procter, had prepared me for something charming, but these poems I confess, surpass my expectations, although they were greatly raised.—I hope you will make me personally acquainted with the young Poet when you and he have leisure, and believe me,

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. Blessington.

"Gore House, June 14th, 1844."

Not much later John Forster adds to a letter to P. G. Patmore relating to Laman Blanchard's melancholy death, the following postscript:

"My kindest regards and remembrances to your son. *I hope he is writing*—mindless of all mean and ridiculous abuse. The day is gone by when such things had the least effect. He has it in him to be a true poet. The highest ambition may be easy to him."

Leigh Hunt, who had long been an intimate friend and literary ally of P. G. Patmore, had done his best to help the young poet by a friendly notice, and with him Coventry Patmore resumed, on more equal terms, the acquaintance which had commenced some years earlier.

Nor was it in literary circles only that his reputa-

tion brought him friends. Two young men, who were devoted to poetry, saw, in the reading room at Chatteris, a review of the early poems; and, judging by the quotations given that a new light had appeared in the world of poetry, sent for the volume, which confirmed their opinion, and made them ambitious, above all things, to make the acquaintance of the writer. Both of them, Mr. Fryer and Mr. Sutton, the former the son of a gentleman-farmer near Chatteris, the latter subsequently the editor of a Manchester paper, succeeded shortly after in gaining an introduction to Patmore, and became his intimate friends and correspondents. The letters to Mr. Fryer are extant in fragments only, but those to Mr. Sutton (see vol. ii.) form one of the most complete series to be found; while Mr. and Mrs. Fryer's letters to Mr. Sutton give an excellent picture of Coventry Patmore about the years 1846 and 1847. Two matters of interest occur in the earlier letters which passed between these friends. It is clear that a strange rumour was current, that the poems were by Tennyson, and that "Coventry Patmore" was his *nom de plume*; also the allusion to Chatteris as one of the scenes of Vaughan's [1] early loves was made in compliment to a lady living there, to whom Mr. Fryer was then engaged. Mr. Fryer writes to Mr. Sutton, "I have just been to see Moxon (Coventry Patmore's publisher). Patmore and Tennyson are *not* the same. Patmore's father is a literary man in poor circumstances. Patmore himself is a barrister pupil of Barry Cornwall." (This is the only written evidence I can find that Patmore ever studied law. I am told that he did for a very short time think of qualifying for the bar.) "Tennyson thinks that Patmore may surpass him." (We may wonder what was the

[1] The hero of "The Angel."

authority for this statement.) "Patmore's appearance is very favourable and he is remarkably modest"; and much more follows in a strain of ecstatic hero-worship.

Whether or no Tennyson had at this date seen Patmore's early poems, and whether he admired them, must remain matter for conjecture. It seems certain that their personal acquaintance cannot have commenced until at least a year after the publication of the early poems, and I think it more probable that it dates from 1846.

CHAPTER V.

HARD TIMES.

ABOUT 1844 P. G. Patmore had begun to feel the pressure of family expenses; and there is reason to suspect that his wife's property had been diminished by mismanagement. With a view to increasing his resources, he had been tempted to speculate somewhat wildly in railway shares. In this he was only following a fashion which led to the ruin of very many. He suddenly found himself deeply involved, and was compelled to leave England secretly and suddenly. His wife accompanied him; and the only information Coventry and his brother received of their change of circumstances was a letter inclosing a remittance, with an intimation that they must now depend on their own resources. Hitherto Coventry Patmore had been quite free from financial pressure: every whim of his had been indulged, and what literary work he had so far done had had no further object than occupation and fame. The revolution in his circumstances was complete; and he and his younger brother Gurney—George was presumably abroad—had to turn their attention to earning a livelihood as best they could. Somehow or other they managed to subsist on contributions to periodical literature, and possibly on translations from French and German. The only indication (scarcely amounting to evidence) that they undertook work of the latter kind is a remark which Patmore once made when someone was speaking of the inaccuracy of some of Bohn's translations: "What better could you expect of boys in

their teens?" (He would, by-the-bye, have been then twenty-two, but such small inaccuracies are not unusual with him.) He managed to scrape together some twenty-five shillings a week, often working for it, as he said, not less than sixteen hours a day. At one time his finances were reduced to three and sixpence, which he recklessly spent on ices—and returned home to find a remittance for some article he had written. No doubt his own and his father's friends helped him with editors and publishers. Of such assistance one sole record comes to hand. Thackeray, who does not seem to have known P. G. Patmore, or to have had any inducement, except his natural generosity, to lend a helping hand to the struggling young poet, wrote to Mr. Nickisson, then the publisher and apparently quasi-editor of "Fraser," as follows:

"October 3rd, 1846.

"MY DEAR NICKISSON,

"I beg you 10,000 pardons for not answering your note. I quite forgot it, that's the truth, until it reproached me yesterday. Will you pay a special attention to the accompanying paper by young Patmore the poet—he is himself a most deserving and clever young fellow who will be a genius some day; and his paper is so odd, humorous and amusing that I hope you will secure it, and its author as a future contributor. "Yours ever

"W. M. T.

"I hope the sea-air will do you and Mrs. Nickisson and Master Nickisson all the good which such good people deserve. If you will use this for next month I promise you an article (D.V.). The fact is that young Mr. Patmore wants help at this present juncture."[1]

[1] Quoted from "The Athenæum," No. 3,110, June 4th, 1887, to which it was sent with the following letter.

"THACKERAY ON MR. COVENTRY PATMORE.

"12, South Castle Street, Liverpool,

"May 23, 1887.

"I notice you have been drawing attention to the very interest-

I have not been able to ascertain what the contribution was, nor whether it was accepted. Three sets of verses on "Little Edith" (Edith Procter) by Patmore were printed in "Fraser" (December, 1846), two of which were republished in "Tamerton Church Tower." In any case the letter stands as a monument of Thackeray's thoughtful kindness.

One of Coventry Patmore's earliest contributions of this period was a poem printed in "Punch" (vol. ix., p. 73), entitled "Vive la Guerre." The subject is General Pelissier's alleged act of barbarity in smoking to death 500 Arabs in the caves of the Dahra.[1] The poem, which was republished in the 1853 edition of "Tamerton Church Tower," entitled "The Caves of Dahra," is in eight stanzas. The verses have a certain eloquence and "go," but are not worth dwelling upon except as a record of this time of strain. This lasted for some fifteen months; long enough to test Patmore's powers of endurance and strength of will; long enough too to cause some detriment to his health, which had never been robust, and was seriously deteriorated by hard work and poor living. It was terminated by the kindness of Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton, who was ever ready to help distress, especially when suffered by poets. Patmore years afterwards wrote as follows:

"Lord Houghton was as thoughtful as he was kind and generous in disposition. Soon after the publication of my first volume of verses, and when I was without any definite

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ing letters of Thackeray's which are now appearing in 'Scribner.' The letter of his, of which I enclose you a copy, has been in my sister's possession for the last fifteen years, and I think it will interest some of your readers. Can you tell me who Mr. Nickisson was? I fancy he was editor of one of the magazines.

"HAROLD E. YOUNG."

[1] Cf. Kinglake's "Invasion of the Crimea," vol. i., p. 8, where see note, which appears in some measure to exculpate Pelissier.

views of a profession, and in the greatest peril of being compelled, *faute de mieux*, to take to that of literary hack and magazine writer, I met him at a party—almost the first I ever went to. He sought me out and asked me, without any preliminaries, whether I should like a place in a Government Office. In a few months' time, he got me an appointment as Assistant Librarian in the British Museum—the position of all in the world best suited to me."

This memorandum seems to have been written as late as 1882, and may perhaps be reconciled with the following story, which Mr. Gosse tells as related to him by Mrs. Procter. It is far more likely than not that the meeting which Patmore records took place at her house. We have only to suppose that Mr. Milnes had previously seen Patmore without making himself known to him.

"After a dinner at her house in 1846, Monckton Milnes said to her in the drawing room, 'And who is your lean young friend with the frayed coat-cuffs?' 'Oh, Mr. Milnes,' she replied, 'you would not talk in that way if you knew how clever he is and how unfortunate. Have you read his "Poems"?' Milnes took them away in his pocket, and wrote to her next morning, 'If your young friend would like a post in the Library of the British Museum, it shall be obtained for him, if only to induce you to forget what must have seemed my heartless flippancy. His book is the work of a true poet, and we must see that he never lacks butter for his bread.'"

Not long after, Patmore received the following letter:

"April 11.

"My dear Sir,

"I have long had a fancy that you might like to have some regular employment in the world of books in the British Museum, and I wrote lately to the Archbishop of Canterbury, suggesting you as a fit person for such a situation. He was unable to give me any satisfactory answer, but recommended, if it suited you, that you should see some of the authorities and secretary of the Museum, and find out

what, if any, place was likely to come vacant, and what it would suit you to undertake.

"I enclose you a note for the librarian Mr. Panizzi, to whom you can be quite confidential and who would, I believe, help you in any way in his power. You had better also see Mr. Forshall the Secretary.

"If however you feel that this kind of employment would not be agreeable to you, pray tell me so at once and I will see if anything can be done for you in any other quarter.

"Believe me,

"Yrs. very truly,

"RICH. M. MILNES."

There can be no doubt that Patmore eagerly followed up this introduction. But it was not till some months later that the appointment was actually made. It is said that the authorities hesitated on the ground that he knew so few languages. However, the following letter was dispatched by the Secretary on Nov. 18, 1846.

"Mr. Forshall has the pleasure to acquaint Mr. Coventry Patmore that the Principal Trustees have nominated him to be one of the supernumerary Assistants in the Department of Printed Books in the British Museum.

"If Mr. Patmore will call on Mr. Panizzi, he will learn at what time he may commence his engagement, and every necessary particular respecting his duty.

"British Museum."

Mr. Monckton Milnes's kindness to Patmore was the starting-point of a friendship which lasted to the end; and it was not long before Patmore had the opportunity of doing something towards repayment of the debt which he owed him.

Milnes's "Life and Letters of Keats," published in 1848, had probably been some time in preparation, and it has long been known that Patmore rendered Milnes considerable help with it, though of what

kind and to what extent can apparently never be ascertained. Patmore preserved but few letters from Monckton Milnes, and these throw no light on the subject. Some of Patmore's letters to Milnes are however extant. It is probable that these are but a portion of those received, and the only evidence they afford is that Patmore had, as I think correctly, assigned to his own father some articles on Keats in "The London Magazine" which had previously been attributed to Hazlitt.[1] (This information however was given for the second edition, 1863.) The only other reference to the work is in a letter of Jan. 19, 1863, in which Patmore requests Monckton Milnes to omit a passage in one of Keats's letters to John Hamilton Reynolds, which he evidently thinks disparaging to his father.[2] This request shows how almost morbidly sensitive Coventry Patmore was about all that concerned his father's reputation. It seems to me scarcely necessary to suppose that Keats in writing the passage meant to imply any contempt.

It is also known that a letter of Keats's, in Coven-

[1] P. G. Patmore was thought by many to have modelled his style on that of Hazlitt, who was one of the authors parodied in "Rejected Articles." W. C. Hazlitt states that P. G. Patmore and others used to found their theatrical criticisms on William Hazlitt's opinions. In this, as in all other cases, W. C. Hazlitt's statements must be taken with a very liberal pinch of salt; but they may be considered at least to show the trend of literary gossip, and to prove that the elder Patmore was thought to be somewhat indebted to Hazlitt for both the style and the material of his writings.

[2] The passage indicated occurs in a letter dated May 2, 1818. "If I scribble long letters I must have my vagaries . . . I must play my draughts as I please, and for my advantage and your erudition, crown a white with a black, or a black with a white, and move into black or white, far and near as I please—*I must go from Hazlitt to Patmore*, and make Wordsworth and Coleman play at leap-frog, or keep one of them down a whole half-holiday at fly-the-garter: from Gray to Gay, from Little to Shakespeare. . . ."

try Patmore's handwriting, was found among Lord Houghton's papers.[1]

This is all the evidence I have been able to obtain of Patmore's co-operation, though it is probable that further assistance was given verbally, or in letters which have been destroyed. There is however no acknowledgment of Patmore's assistance in the preface to the book, and it is unreasonable to suppose that more than moderate help was given; while the style of the work, which nowhere resembles Patmore's, explodes the theory that it was in great part written by him.

Further evidence of Patmore's gratitude is found in the dedication to Milnes in 1853 of the volume of poems entitled "Tamerton Church Tower," and also in the following letter:

"Library British Museum.
"Monday, July 10, 1848.

"My dear Mr. Milnes,

"I wish very much that my little boy should be called by a name, which shall remind him of his father's debts to one, but for whose kindness there would have been no little boy to be named.

"Will you impose upon me an additional obligation to gratitude by conferring upon my son, in your name, a continual lesson of thankfulness? If you are disposed to grant my request, you will be pleased to know that Mrs. Procter will be associated with you in this kindness to

"Your affectionate friend,
"Coventry K. Patmore.

"R. Monckton Milnes, Esq."

For Patmore's appointment at the Museum had secured him a competence, though a small one; and not many months passed before he married Emily Augusta Andrews, with whom he had been acquainted for some little time.

[1] Colvin's "Keats," p. 225. See also a letter of Patmore's to Mr. Sutton, vol. ii., which shows that he was in possession of some of Keats's MS. letters in 1847.

CHAPTER VI

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FROM the end of 1846 till the beginning of 1866, when he retired, Patmore worked steadily at the Museum, and was mainly engaged on the catalogue of books, which was greatly in arrear. He was considered there a diligent though not specially qualified assistant; but it was scarcely to be expected that one possessing his keen literary instincts would confine himself to the merely perfunctory routine, or resist the temptation of dipping into the books which passed through his hands. He writes later:

> "I did a good deal more than the average work; yet, during my twenty years of service, I may say that I read tens of thousands of books; for I never passed one in any language I could read without looking into it and ascertaining its real character and value. At the end of my time of service, I had come to the conclusion that, of the forty miles of shelves in the Museum, forty feet would contain all the real literature of the world."

His constantly increasing interest in Theology made it specially difficult for him to deny himself a study of such religious books as came before him, and I remember his telling me that he had been greatly struck by the abundance and high quality of such work produced in France. Occasionally too, if he had a poem on hand, his cataloguing work had to give way; and his colleagues recall times of inspiration when he would write off a great number of

lines in an exceedingly short time. Dr. Garnett writes:[1]

"His composition was rapid. I have frequently seen twenty or more lines which he had written, he said, in the last half-hour, and refashioning was rarely needful, though he was an unwearied corrector in minor details."

Sometimes too the routine work would be interrupted for an interesting conversation. Mrs. Fryer writes:

"March 17, 1847.

"I daresay Alfred has written you a full and true account of his town adventures; how he kept Patmore away from his Library table for two hours, talking and walking up and down the public rooms as if they were demented, till some common-sense thought toll'd them the passing hour."

He seems to have been greatly respected by his colleagues, though his reticent and self-contained manners kept him somewhat aloof from general intimacy.

In the article quoted above Dr. Garnett says:

"When I came, a mere lad, to work in the Library of the British Museum, I was introduced to all my colleagues with one, doubtless accidental, exception. I was some time before finding out who the tall, spare, silent man was, who, alone of the assistants, sat in the King's Library; who, though perfectly urbane when he did converse, seemed rather among than of the rest of the staff, and who appeared to be usually entrusted with some exceptional task, now cataloguing a mighty collection of sermons from the King's Library gallery, now the pamphlets of the French Revolution. His diligence was certainly exemplary, though he was not considered a particularly able assistant from the librarian's point of view, and made no pretensions to extensive linguistic attainments or bibliographic lore."

Mr. Richard Holmes, the Queen's Librarian, who was considerably his junior, confirms this record, and

[1] "Saturday Review," Dec. 5, 1896.

tells me that Patmore's silence and pre-occupation isolated him from the *camaraderie* of the Museum, but that his poetic reputation made him a subject of special interest; that his juniors felt proud of any notice he might take of them, still more of an invitation to his home.

His acquaintance with persons of influence enabled him too to give special support to his colleagues in their not infrequent endeavours to improve their position. Probably the following letter to Monckton Milnes refers to some movement for increase of salary.

"British Museum.
"August 1, 1859.

"MY DEAR MR. MILNES,

"I called a few days ago to thank you for the serviceable part you took in the discussion of the Museum business. We all here consider that you have served us most materially and that our prospects are now far better than they were before the debate. Mr. Gladstone alone stands between us and our hopes. Had he prolonged his stay *one day* in the Ionian Islands, we should have gained our point; but his vote turned the decision of the Trustees against us, in the very large meeting which took place the day after his return. So I am informed. . . .

"Believe me,
"My dear Mr. Milnes,
"Ever sincerely yours,
"COVENTRY PATMORE."

"R. M. Milnes, Esq."

There is evidence that he was on good terms with his superiors, while his connection with the press gave him opportunities of supporting the interests of the Museum, and of calling public attention to the improvements made under Mr. Panizzi's able rule. He writes in 1872:

"Panizzi was the most able administrator I have known. He was very rough and Bismarckian in his manners, but he

was never offensive to any of his subordinates so long as they did their duty. At a party at Lord Stanhope's or Lord Stanley's of Alderley—I forget which—I was on one side of an open door, and overheard Thackeray and somebody else congratulating Panizzi on an article which had just appeared in the 'Edinburgh Review' about the new domed reading-room and the library of the British Museum in general. He assured them that he had not the least idea who wrote it. This was odd, because I had written it, and had submitted it to the perusal of Mr. Jones,[1] the Keeper, before printing it."

In 1851 Patmore employed his position at the Museum and his influence with his colleagues to promote a patriotic scheme, which subsequently developed into the formation of rifle corps through the whole of the country. The account of this may be given in Patmore's own words.

"In 1851, when England was a good deal excited by the threats of the French Colonels and by suspicions of the intentions of Louis Napoleon, who had declared that he 'represented a defeat' (Waterloo), and implied that he meant to avenge it, there was a good deal of talk about the propriety of organizing volunteer riflemen. Thinking that an ounce of action might be worth a ton of talk, I went round to my colleagues at the Museum, and all but one agreed to start a club, in which we should learn how to handle a rifle, and to endeavour to obtain members enough to justify us in asking permission of the Government to drill. I immediately wrote a letter to 'The Times,' saying what we had done; and several persons of eminence responded to it with offers of personal assistance. I asked Alfred Tennyson to help, and he took up the matter ardently, giving a handsome donation towards our expenses and writing and publishing in 'The Times' his enthusiastic 'Riflemen form.' James Spedding and others also helped with money. We called a meeting, and soon found ourselves able to make up a thousand men, willing to spend ten pounds each on their equipment. We then wrote to the War Office for

[1] Mr. J. Winter Jones, the Keeper of the Printed Books.

permission to drill. After some correspondence the offer and permission were refused; but, shortly afterwards, the Government issued its appeal to the country for the formation of Volunteer corps—an appeal which probably would never have been made but for our offer and the expediency of arrogating the initiative of the movement to the Government itself. Rifle corps were at once formed all over the country—two or three before ours got into working order. I used to go through the drill in Westminster Hall, but soon found it too exhausting for my strength."

This memorandum, written many years later, shows a confusion of two distinct periods. The "threats of the French Colonels" are antedated by more than six years. Tennyson's "Rifle-men form" appeared in 1859. Patmore may have confused this poem with "The Third of February," which belongs to the earlier time. He is however right about the date of the letters in "The Times," and extant correspondence shows that he had been in communication with Tennyson about the later poem.

This further memorandum gives additional details:

"After my little Idyll 'Amelia' I am prouder of nothing than of having started the modern Volunteers. Almost immediately after the 'Coup d'Etat' I got together some of my colleagues at the British Museum, and wrote a letter signed C. P. to 'The Times' to say that a real nucleus was then formed for what others were only talking about. Mr. Denison, the Deputy-Judge-Advocate for Scotland, called on me at the Museum in consequence of my letter, and my little first step astonished Alfred Tennyson, James Spedding, Mr. Hans Busk, who was a member of the 'Victoria Rifles'—the last remnant of the Volunteers of the early part of the century—and several others. We got up a meeting somewhere in St. James's Street, and, having obtained a large list of names to form our first 'Regiment' we wrote to the then Minister of War for permission to drill. After some correspondence, in which the Minister was careful to ascertain our numbers and the expense we were prepared to go to, the permission was refused, the Government apparently deeming it politic that the initiative should seem

to come from themselves; for, about twelve months afterwards, they published the permission we had sought, but of course without any reference to our proposal.

The letter alluded to is as follows (Jan. 22, 1852):

"A RIFLE CORPS.

"*To the Editor of The Times.*

"SIR,—Having read letter after letter in the newspapers recommending the immediate adoption of means whereby our capabilities of self-defence may be increased, and having suffered daily disappointment in my expectation of an announcement that something had been done towards the formation of organized societies for rifle practice, I resolved to try what I could do by way of taking the *premier pas*, which, in this instance, seemed to me to be neither costly nor difficult. I am one of a large number of gentlemen employed in a public establishment of an eminently pacific character. I proposed that some of us and of our friends should combine for the purpose of learning, in the cheapest and quickest way, how to handle a rifle. The first 19 I spoke to instantly agreed to the proposal: the 20th refused, because he was already engaged as a member of a similar association. As most of us are not free till past 4 o'clock in the afternoon, we are to put up with lamplight practice in a London rifle gallery, until the spring evenings allow of our sallying forth a few miles, once or twice a week, into the country. A moderate weekly subscription will pay for the gallery and ammunition, and an entrance fee is to be imposed, for the purchase of a few good ordinary rifles—one to every five or six of us—and these, after serving our immediate purpose, are to be distributed among the members, as prizes for skilful shooting, at the end of a fixed period. Within a week from this time we shall be in full operation; and, from the eagerness with which the plan has been entered into by all to whom I have spoken, I have little doubt but that our example, if made known through your columns, will be followed by many thousands of the young men of London and the large provincial towns. Before Parliament has been open a week we shall certainly be able to present a numerously and most respectably signed petition for Government assistance and organization. C. K. P."

This called forth the following reply:

"RIFLE CLUBS.

"*To the Editor of The Times.*

"SIR,—I read in 'The Times' of to-day a letter on the formation of societies for rifle practice with a view to national defence, which bore the signature of 'C. K. P.,' but, unfortunately, no address. As that letter seemed to me to be one of sense and spirit, to be written in real earnest, and to have a definite practical bearing, I am anxious to lose no time in endeavouring to co-operate with the writer in his honourable undertaking; and I hope that by publishing this letter you will assist me to put myself into communication with him.

"I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
"STEPHEN CHARLES DENISON.

"3, Southwick-place, Gloucester-square, Jan. 22."

The printed circular issued by the committee which was formed has been preserved, with a letter[1] from Patmore to William Allingham, inviting him to join the movement.

"Metropolitan Rifle Club,
"7, Waterloo Place, Pall Mall.

"In consequence of the very numerous applications respecting this Association, the Committee think that a statement of their views, in originating the Club and its sections, may be useful to those who are desirous of joining it, and of knowing what the extent of their liabilities, personal and pecuniary, will be.

"The primary motive in forming this Association is the necessity of making such a demonstration of power, as shall abate the nuisance to which of late years this great country has been subjected, from the alarms caused by alleged projects of the Invasion of our shores and the pillage of our towns. Let us, as Englishmen, stand side by side, for our defence, assured that when we are so united and armed, no foreign foe will have the hardihood to attempt to violate them. The immunity from Invasion which our shores have

[1] Printed in vol. ii.; the date is Feb. 1852.

for so many years enjoyed, is no warrant for its continuance, and the sense of security which it is so apt to inspire, might lead to the most dangerous, if not fatal results: steam has bridged the narrow seas; and, although in the case of Domestic differences a few days sufficed for that imposing demonstration which is fresh in every recollection, such an impromptu organization would be comparatively worthless as a means of resisting foreign aggression. Time is an essential: arms cannot be made for thousands in less than many months: men, were they even ready, cannot handle them skilfully without long practice; it is necessary therefore, for the future security of the country, that it should possess, in the readiness and organization of its citizens, a force which would materially assist in repelling the incursions of any foreign power.

"The Committee of this Club therefore propose the following as their idea of the essential conditions of its constitution.

"I. That every person joining it does so to acquire the use of a weapon which in time of need may add to the defence of his country.

"II. That this Association being a Rifle Club, its meetings shall be for the purpose of perfecting its Members in the skilful use of the weapon at a mark.

"III. That it will be necessary for this purpose that the Members possess a supply of Rifles of the same make and calibre, so that, if required for active service, the same ammunition and projectile may be employed by all.

"IV. That in the event of the Government requiring the assistance of the Club or its sections, the Members shall not be called upon to leave the locality they belong to and are most interested in defending, except those who may volunteer to do so.

"V. That every person on joining the Club shall intimate to the Secretary, in writing, his wish to do so, and his willingness to conform himself to its regulations, and shall pay the Treasurer the sum of 10*s.* as an Entrance Fee, and such Subscription, not exceeding one Guinea, as may hereafter be found necessary.

"In conclusion, being well assured that there are many who, although prevented by circumstances from giving their personal services in aid of this patriotic movement, would yet most readily subscribe towards the defrayment of the

expenses incurred in securing ourselves against aggression and spoliation, the Committee will be happy to receive the subscriptions of such persons, to be applied to the general purposes of the Association, one of which is to procure a supply of Rifles for the use of those members who may not be able or disposed to purchase them.

"By order of the Committee,

"G. BORLAS CHILDS, Hon. Sec.

"LAKE PRICE, Esq., Treasurer.

"Central Committee, Feb. 2nd, 1852."

Patmore used in conversation to assert that he had been the first to start the Rifle Corps movement of this period. His letter to "The Times" is not however quite the first that appeared: there are letters on the subject in the issues of Jan. 15 and 21. These however merely advocate the movement in general terms, whereas Patmore's letter is not only specific, but shows that the idea had already taken shape among his friends. I have not been able to discover any trace of such a movement in 1851. In 1852 a considerable number of pamphlets on "National Defence" were issued; among them one by Sir Charles Napier. The earliest of these seems to be the republication of "A Letter and Postscript to 'The Times'" (Jan. 30 and Feb. 5, 1852). Although it is impossible to speak with certainty on the point, Patmore's claim to have been the first definitely practical advocate of the movement after the *Coup d'Etat* seems to be justified.

In 1859, when his family expenses were increasing, Patmore was a candidate for the Librarianship of the Colonial Office, which however he failed to obtain. The candidature was the occasion of his receiving cordial testimonials both from Panizzi and from Mr. Winter Jones.

His health, always precarious, having been seriously impaired by anxiety for his wife, and by a very

serious illness which followed her death in 1862, in the following year he applied to the Trustees for three months leave of absence,[1] which was readily granted, and was subsequently extended. He left England in 1864, and the holiday was mainly spent in Rome, where, as is related more fully elsewhere, he joined the Roman Catholic Church and became engaged to his second wife. In the same year he presented to the Museum a collection of MS. plays which had come into his father's possession, and were by him attributed to Sheridan,[2] and which had been made the subject of an article by Coventry Patmore. The gift is thus acknowledged by the Librarian:

"British Museum,
"Nov. 22, 1864.

"DEAR SIR,

"The Trustees have most willingly accepted your present of the collection of MS. plays which accompanied your letter to me of the 12th October, and they have directed me to return you their special thanks for your liberality in enabling them to place these interesting literary curiosities within the reach of Students and the public in general.

"I am,
"Dear Sir,
"Yours truly,
"A. PANIZZI.

"Coventry Patmore, Esq."

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[1] The medical certificate which enabled him to obtain this holiday is as follows:

"56, Harley Street,
"Oct. 13th.

"I beg to state that I find as the result of close personal observation that Mr. Coventry Patmore's health is failing and that he is now unequal to the performance of his duties in the Museum with efficiency or with satisfaction to himself. I believe that an attempt to persevere in London work will lead to a serious increase of the lung mischief for which it was necessary for Mr. Patmore to spend the winter of 1863-4 in Italy.

"(Signed) RICH. QUAIN, M.D."

[2] In "My Friends and Acquaintance."

His second marriage had made it unnecessary, and his still precarious health seemed to render it undesirable that he should continue his work. He took professional advice[1] on the subject and decided to retire from the Museum. In 1866 he was awarded a pension, which he drew until his death.

The following letter announces the grant of the pension :

"British Museum,
"6 January, 1866.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have the pleasure of informing you that the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury have been pleased to award to you a retired allowance of one hundred and twenty-six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence (*£126 13s. 4d.*) a year.

"This is the highest amount which their Lordships could allow you under the provisions of the Superannuation Act, and I hope you may enjoy it for many years.

"Yours faithfully,
"A. PANIZZI.

"Coventry K. D. Patmore, Esq."

Patmore always considered that he had been most generously treated by the Museum authorities. He also reproached himself—quite needlessly, as he is acknowledged to have been a diligent worker—for having lost time through a tendency to afternoon somnolence, which he could conquer only by allowing himself "forty winks." He had intended his gift of the manuscript plays to serve as an ac-

[1] This is the certificate which he presented with his request to be allowed to retire :

"I certify that I have been attending Mr. Coventry Patmore for some months, and that I have advised him to discontinue sedentary occupations and reside entirely in the country. He has threatenings, and indeed already some measure, of organic disease of one lung, and it is imperatively necessary that he should adopt means, and direct the whole mode of his life, to arrest its progress.

"(Signed) CHAS. GAGE BROWN, M.D."

knowledgment of the Trustees' kindness in granting him long leave of absence, and some years afterwards an opportunity occurred of conferring on the Museum a more substantial memorial of his gratitude and a compensation for any working time which he had lost. In 1880 he presented to the Trustees a valuable copy on vellum of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. This had been eagerly desired for the library by Panizzi, who had, soon after Patmore's admission to the Museum, advocated its purchase.

The following letter was received by him in acknowledgment of the gift:

"27th February, 1880.

"SIR,

"I have had the honour to lay before the Trustees of the British Museum the present which you have been so good as to make to them of a copy, in seventeen volumes, bound in twenty-one, of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas printed on vellum in the year 1570-71, being the Dedication-copy presented to Pope Pius V., and which afterwards came into the possession of Philip II. of Spain.

"The Trustees directed me to convey to you the expression of their special thanks for this very valuable donation.

"I shall have great pleasure in causing the enclosure in your letter to me of the 9th inst., relative to the donation, to be inserted in the first volume of the work.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient Servant,

"EDW. A. BOND.

"Coventry K. D. Patmore, Esq."

Patmore went to the Museum to see his gift in its place, and writes:

"I saw my St. Thomas placed in a glass case. The keeper of the printed books—Mr. Bullen—ranks it as one of the two most magnificent books in the whole library."[1]

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[1] It is of course quite impossible to believe that Mr. Bullen said this seriously. There may have been some qualifying clause, as

Patmore, at any rate for a time, rejoiced in his release from regular duties. I think too that a complete change of occupation was profitable to his development as a poet, and that nothing could have been more serviceable to him, physically or mentally, than the life which ensued on his retirement, spent as it was almost entirely in the open air, while he was occupied in developing his newly-acquired estate in Sussex. Nevertheless he often, in after years, looked back with pleasure on this period of regular and punctual employment, and occasionally talked of seeking re-admission to the Museum, though he never actually took any such step. But the twenty years he had passed there, though associated with straitened means, precarious health, and the most poignant sorrow of his life, had ceased to be painful in retrospect, and had, as he thought, brought with them an excellent discipline, the relaxation of which did not seem to him to have been altogether advantageous. He also recognized his debt to the Museum for a close friendship and literary alliance with Dr. Garnett, in whom he had found a sympathetic adviser and critic of his poetical work, who has done as much as anyone to create an intelligent appreciation of his writings, and to whose help in compiling this memoir I am glad to acknowledge my deep obligation.

"of its kind." It would however be characteristic of Patmore, always optimistic about his own concerns, to forget the qualification. For further particulars about the book, the reader is referred to Appendix VI., end of vol. ii.

CHAPTER VII

THE PRÆ-RAPHAELITES

COVENTRY PATMORE'S first volume of poems had shown certain peculiarities of method which had been discerned and clearly defined by Sir E. B. Lytton in the admirable critical letter which has been printed (pp. 54-57). He had noticed an excessive and undue departure from conventional rules, which, though they sometimes prove destructive of originality and force, deserve to be taken into account as the result of accumulated experience; a tendency to indulge in a vivid presentation of detail which, unless it be kept in due subordination to the more general effect, is antagonistic to unity and proportion; and an intrusion of commonplace or prosaic ideas and objects such as no power can raise to the true domain of poetry.

A company of artists, destined to be widely known as the Præ-Raphaelite Brotherhood and to exercise an important influence on contemporary art, was at about the same time formulating the ideas which were, a few years later, to be proclaimed both in theory and in practice. This is certainly not the place for any attempt at a full analysis of the principles of the Brotherhood; but it may be noted briefly that their aims were, to throw over the stale conventions by which art was becoming strangled; to return to a direct study of nature, considering no representation of even its least important accessories unworthy of attention and labour; and to enlarge their range of subject by the inclusion of everything which

could make any legitimate appeal to the æsthetic sense.

The similarity of aim and performance in the earlier work of the painters and of the poet are sufficiently manifest both in strength and weakness; and though Patmore himself never recognized any community of aim, the Præ-Raphaelites found themselves in special sympathy with these early poems. William Rossetti writes :

"Mr. Patmore's first volume of poetry, having come out in 1844, was soon afterwards reviewed with commendation in a publication that Leigh Hunt was bringing out. My brother and I read that review and were impressed by it, and soon we got the book—[this] must I suppose have been in 1845, if not in 1844. We admired the poems enormously, and I daresay that in the course of a couple of years we had read every one of them through 20 or 30 times. Gabriel was certain to talk about them to fellow-students at the R.A., etc., and more especially to Hunt, Millais, and Woolner."

Mr. F. G. Stephens too bears testimony to his own enthusiasm for these poems, which was shared by his friends. They used, he says, to carry the volume about with them constantly, and to read it at every moment of leisure.

It was not however till some years later that Patmore formed personal relations with the Brotherhood. He records his first introduction to them in the following note. His repudiation of resemblance may be accepted as regards any conscious theory, though in practice the similarity must be admitted.

"Soon after I was first married, and before I had published anything but my little volume of 1844, Thomas Woolner introduced himself to me and made me known to his P.R.B. friends, Millais, Holman Hunt, Gabriel Rossetti, and others, who claimed me as the poetical representative of their principles and got me to give two or three articles to the 'Germ.' I don't think that either by theory or practice I had any particular claim to be regarded as a

P.R.B. However, their mistake was very lucky for me, since they were all most interesting persons to know, and one or two of them became close and life-long friends."

The actual date of Patmore's first acquaintance with the P.R.B. is given by Mr. William Rossetti :

"The P.R.B. was started in Sept. 1848; but I do not find in my papers any *personal* mention of Mr. Patmore till 23 Sept., 1849, when it is stated that Woolner had received an appointment to dine with him, and that P. [Patmore] had already been reading with approval some of W.'s [Woolner's] MS. poems. I don't rightly remember how it is that W.'s poems had been introduced to P.'s notice; it must I think have been through Mrs. Orme [sister of the first Mrs. Patmore] or through a Russian gentleman, Vom Bach, who was known to the Ormes and had some employment at the British Museum. Then, through W., all the other P.R.B.'s soon got to know Mr. Patmore personally—Millais, Hunt, Stephens, Gabriel, myself, and perhaps Collinson, though as to this last I have no distinct recollection. The one who saw most of him was I suppose in those early years, Woolner; next in order would come myself, Gabriel, Hunt, Stephens, Millais. P. must have been a year or two older than the oldest P.R.B., and we all looked up to him much for his performances in poetry, his general intellectual insight and maturity, and his knowledge of important persons whom we came to know through him—Tennyson in especial. From 1849 to 1853 or so we all saw a good deal of Mr. Patmore."

Mr. Rossetti adds that from this date circumstances rendered their intercourse rare, but that he always retained a high regard for him.

Patmore gives the following accounts of his intercourse with the Brotherhood :

"I was intimate with the Præ-Raphaelites when we were little more than boys together. They were all very simple, pure-minded, ignorant, and confident. Millais[1] was looked

[1] Millais commences his diary with the following entry :

"Oct. 16, 1851. I am advised by Coventry Patmore to keep a diary. Commence one forthwith."

Patmore however does not seem to have practised what he

upon as in some sort the leader, but this I fancy was partly because he always had more command of money than the others, who were very poor. They could not even have printed the 'Germ' without assistance. I well remember Millais triumphantly flourishing before my eyes a cheque for £150 which he got for 'The Return of the Dove to the Ark.' Once I was at a gathering of the Brethren and their friends, when Holman Hunt produced forty sketches, and said that any one might have them for a pound apiece. I suppose that a hundred pounds apiece would scarcely have bought them a short time afterwards. About this time Rossetti sold a little drawing of a girl and boy dancing before Borgia for £5. Lord Houghton commissioned me to try if I could get it for £100 a little while after.

"Holman Hunt attracted me personally more than any of the other Præ-Raphaelites. He was heroically simple and constant in his purpose of primarily serving religion by his art, and had a Quixotic notion that it was absolutely obligatory upon him to redress every wrong that came under his notice. This mistake sometimes brought him into serious trouble, and more than once into danger of his life.

"Rossetti was in manners, mind, and appearance completely Italian. He had very little knowledge of or sympathy with English Literature; and always gave me the impression of tensity rather than intensity.

"Woolner was and is a brilliant talker and letter-writer. He has greatly injured his worldly prospects by his habit of always saying, in the strongest words, what is uppermost in his mind; but he is nearly always right. Millais' conversation and personality were not striking, except as being in strong contrast with his vigour and refinement as an artist. From the beginning he felt and exhibited a boyish delight in worldly success and popularity. I used to say in conversation with the Præ-Raphaelite Brethren upon finish in art, that 'It is the last rub that polishes the mirror.' I have since been pleased to hear this saying of mine quoted as an established proverb."

Patmore introduced Gabriel Rossetti to Tennyson. Rossetti writes, January, 1854:

preached. The notebook to which I have alluded (p. 120) is called a "diary" rather by courtesy. It covers less than two years, 1862-3, and even so far is not kept with any regularity.

Coventry Patmore,

from a drawing by J. Brett, R.A., (1855)

Swan Electric Engraving Co

"In 1850 I ventured to send my first volume of verse to Tennyson. I don't think he wrote to me, but I heard incidentally that he thought well of it; and during a subsequent visit to London (in 1852 perhaps) Coventry Patmore, to my boundless joy, proposed to take me to call on the great poet, then not long married, and living at Twickenham. We were admitted, shown upstairs, and soon a tall and swarthy man came in, with loose dark hair and beard, very near-sighted; shook hands cordially, yet with a profound quietude of manner; immediately afterwards asked us to stay to dine. I stayed."

Millais, in 1851, painted the portrait of Emily Augusta Patmore,[1] which has been reproduced for these volumes, and exhibited a picture, of which the subject was taken from Patmore's poem, "The Woodman's Daughter." (This was shown among his collected works in 1898.) In the same year Patmore induced Ruskin to write his celebrated defence of Millais and of the Præ-Raphaelite school in general, which had been furiously attacked in "The Times."

Patmore writes:

"The day when 'The Times' made its furious attack on Millais' picture of 'Christ in the Carpenter's Shop' Millais came to me in great agitation and anger, and begged me to ask Ruskin to take the matter up. I went at once to Ruskin, and the next day after there appeared in 'The Times' a letter of great length and amazing quality, considering how short a time Ruskin had to examine the picture and make up his mind about it."

The letter alluded to was written on May 9, 1851,

[1] Other portraits made for Patmore by the P. R. B. were; by Millais, a drawing of the eldest son, incomplete; medallions of Patmore and of his first wife, by Woolner; by Holman Hunt, the pencil sketch of Eliza Patmore (mentioned in Chapter I.); also pencil sketches of Emily Honoria and Tennyson Patmore, the eldest daughter and second son. John Brett made a portrait of Emily Augusta Patmore, in 1859, of Coventry himself (1855) and of Mary Anne Caroline Patmore, both of which last are reproduced in these volumes.

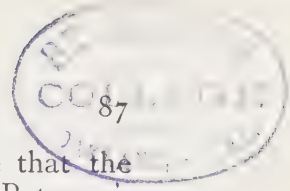
and appeared on May 13. A second letter of Ruskin's on Holman Hunt's "Valentine" from the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" appeared on May 30.

It is evident from this that Patmore's acquaintance with Ruskin was already of some standing. I have no record of their first meeting, but think it probable that it occurred through Patmore's association with the Andrews family. Ruskin's connection with Dr. Andrews is recorded pp. 126, 127: the allusions to him in the "Præterita" are abundant; and I think it likely that Ruskin never lost sight of the family, but through them became acquainted with Patmore, not later than 1847.

When, in 1849, "The Germ" was started, Patmore was asked to contribute, and sent a short poem, "The Seasons," which was subsequently reprinted in "Tamerton Church Tower" and in the collected poems. Rossetti was enthusiastic about this contribution, and in a letter to his brother William copies it out at length with the remark, "Stunning, isn't it?" Patmore also sent to the editors his essay on Macbeth, probably his earliest prose work, which has been mentioned above (p. 45), and a second poem, entitled, "Stars and Moon," one eminently characteristic of the poet's thought, but which he never cared to republish.

In 1857 Patmore went to Oxford to see the decorative work which was being done in the large room of the "Union" by Rossetti, William Morris, and others. Mr. Mackail, in his "Life of William Morris" lately published, writes:

> "The only record of their first fugitive and fairylike beauty is in an article by Mr. Coventry Patmore in 'The Saturday Review' for the 26th of December, 1857, which speaks of the colour as 'sweet, bright and pure as a cloud in the sunshine,' and 'so brilliant as to make the walls look like the margin of an illuminated manuscript.'"



It is evident from the correspondence that the Brotherhood had considerable respect for Patmore's judgment, not only of their literary efforts but also of their paintings, though it was for their poetical productions that his advice was mainly sought. Rossetti submitted to him, before publication, his translations from the "Early Italian Poets," and in more recent years Patmore expended an incalculable amount of time and labour in criticising and revising Woolner's later poems. He also enlarged the original Præ-Raphaelite circle by introducing other writers, notably William Allingham, who came to be intimate with the Brotherhood generally and especially with Rossetti.

Some life-long friendships resulted from this association. With F. G. Stephens and Woolner, Patmore was on intimate terms to the last: with others the former intercourse partly lapsed through change of abode, occupation, and circumstance. Between 1862, the date of Emily Patmore's death, and 1875, when he spent a year in London, Patmore lived a life of seclusion and saw few of his former friends. While in town he endeavoured with some success to gather his former associates round him, and saw many members of the Brotherhood. Intercourse with Gabriel Rossetti was rendered somewhat difficult by new friendships which had been formed in the interval, as the following letters show. These also give evidence of Patmore's desire to reinstate the former terms of friendship and literary sympathy.

"21, Campden Hill Road,
"Kensington,
"May 26th, 1875.

"My dear Rossetti,

"I went to Carlyle's last night, to get back my manuscript poems from him, but his niece had gone into the country and left them locked up somewhere, and I shall not be able to get them back till the end of next week at earliest. I hope however that you will still give

me the pleasure of seeing you here on Sunday evening, and we may take some other opportunity of looking over the verses. After so many years we shall find plenty to talk about, without external aid.

"Yours ever truly,

"COVENTRY PATMORE.

"D. G. Rossetti, Esq."

"21, Campden Hill Road,

"Kensington,

"May 27, 1875.

"MY DEAR ROSSETTI,

"As I am not to see you on Sunday, and had not sufficient opportunity when I saw you a few days ago, I must write one word to tell you that, though I have been buried in the country and almost in complete retirement from the world for so many years, I should certainly have endeavoured to see you during that period had I not understood that it would have been difficult to do so without risk of meeting a friend of yours, between whom and me there is so little sympathy, mainly by reason of our mutually distasteful writings, that such meeting was by all means to be avoided. It was only a few days ago that I was told by an acquaintance of yours and mine that this chance was not so great as it once was; and my first action thereupon was to go to Cheyne Row.

"Thank you for your good wishes for my work[1]—which, however, I have no thought of publishing for a long while, if at all during my lifetime. I have something of your own dislike of publicity and all its accompaniments.

"Yours ever truly,

"COVENTRY PATMORE.

"D. G. Rossetti, Esq."

Not long after this, Rossetti began to drift away from his old associates, forming a new circle of friends; and there is no trace of any further intercourse between him and Patmore. There seems however to have been no actual breach, nor, on Patmore's part, any change of friendly feeling. He did indeed regard Rossetti as one who had, both

[1] The Odes.

COVENTRY PATMORE.

From medallion by T. Woolner, R.A., 1849.

in poetry and painting, partly failed to realize his earlier promise. The interval between "possibility and performance" appeared to him to be wide, and the idealism, which Rossetti's early work had foreshadowed, to have been imperfectly developed. Patmore was disappointed with the exhibition of his collected works at the Burlington Club, and found in the poems, as his essay on "Rossetti as a Poet" shows, quite as much to criticise as to praise. But, though Rossetti was a frequent subject of discussion between us (I happened to be staying with Patmore when he was writing the above-named essay), I never heard him utter a word that indicated hostility or implied any reaction against the earlier alliance.

"Præ-Raphaelite Diaries and Letters," recently published by Mr. W. M. Rossetti, give further details of Patmore's association with the Brotherhood, and illustrate his thoughts and opinions at a time about which there is a paucity of records from other sources. I give here the more important extracts in order of date:

P. 222. Tuesday, 25th Sept., 1849.

Patmore has seen and appears much pleased with the prospectus [of "The Germ"], and has given us a little poem named "The Seasons" for our 1st No., but with the proviso that his name shall not transpire, as he means to keep it back in all instances till the appearance of his new volume.

P. 225. Thursday, 18th Oct., 1849.

Woolner . . . has begun a medallion portrait of Patmore, who has given him three sittings, beginning on Sunday.

P. 228. Wednesday, 7th Nov., 1849.

This was the evening fixed for Millais's and Gabriel's introduction to Patmore, at Woolner's study. Gabriel and I went, and Patmore came, but Millais appeared not. We conversed a good deal of Woolner's poems, which Patmore

says are so good that he is surprised they should not be much better.

He [Patmore] insists strongly on the necessity of never leaving a poem till the whole of it be brought to a pitch of excellence perfectly satisfactory; in this respect of general equality, and also in regard to metre, he finds much to object to in Woolner's poem of *My Lady* and considers that these defects are far less prominent in some passages of *Friendship* that were read to him. Henry Taylor, he says, ought to devote ten more years to *Philip Van Artevelde*, and it would then be qualified to live. . . . He read Gabriel's sonnets on Ingres's picture of *Roger and Angelica*, and was much struck with the character they possess of being descriptive of a painting. . . .

P. 229. Thursday, 8th Nov., 1849.

. . . Patmore, talking of Philip Bailey, remarked that he seems to be "painting on clouds, not having his foot on reality." Burns he considers more perfect than Tennyson.

P. 230. Monday, 12th Nov., 1849.

Patmore called on him (Woolner) yesterday, and talked of my poem, in which he finds a most objectionable absence of moral dignity, all the characters being puny and destitute of elevation. He means nevertheless to read it through again, that he may be able to judge of it in detail without looking so much to the scope—or want of scope. These are very much the objections that we had all foreseen, and acquiesce in. . . .

P. 232. Thursday, 22nd Nov., 1849.

A long argument was maintained concerning poetry—Patmore professing that Burns is a greater poet than Tennyson, in which opinion Tennyson himself fully concurs. Patmore instanced, as a line of unsurpassable beauty, "with joy unfeigned brothers and sisters meet," from *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. He says that Tennyson is the greatest *man* he ever came in contact with, far greater in his life than in his writing—perfectly sincere and frank, never paying uncandid compliments. Browning takes more pains to please, and is altogether much more a man of the world. Patmore thinks that Browning does not value himself at so high a point as he is rated by Gabriel and me. Patmore holds the age of narrative poetry to be passed for ever, and

thinks that probably none such will again appear; he considers *Peter Bell*, though most vexatiously imperfect, to be the opening of a new era. He looks on the present race of poets as highly "self-conscious" in comparison with their predecessors, but yet not sufficiently so for the only system now possible—the psychological. The conversation taking a religious turn, he said that the devil is the only being purely reasoning and analytic, and *therefore* is the devil; and he would have every man hold to the faith he is born in, as, if he attempts to get beyond its bounds, he will be far more likely to be a rebel than a seeker after truth,[1] and should not attempt to pull down without having something to build anew. He thinks Millais's picture far better than anything Keats ever did, and that he is adapted to usher in a new style which will eventually educate people into taste, and make his works some day as popular and saleable as Barraud's *We praise Thee, O God.* One of the chief curses of the day he considers to be that every one is critical. Of the poets of this and the last generation he says that they are "all nerves and no hearts." He fraternized with Cross, in whom he sees some resemblance to David Scott, the recently dead brother of W. B. . . . We had some talk of ghosts, to a belief in which Patmore does not see any obstacles. Millais related a singular story on the subject he heard at Oxford, and Woolner some experiences of his own immediate relations and friends. Millais, as we walked home, unburdened himself of his observations and conclusions, and declared that if he had seen Patmore's hand alone cut off, he could have sworn to it as that of a man of genius.

P. 236. Thursday, 13th December, 1849.

Patmore was at Woolner's last night, and read him Poe's tales to his own great satisfaction. He considers Poe the best writer that America has produced. He is in a state of

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[1] This is somewhat noticeable. Patmore, who became a fervent Catholic towards 1863, was in 1849 a strict and indeed prejudiced Protestant.—Note by W. M. R.

I can see nothing in the opinions here attributed to Patmore to justify this statement, which moreover is in direct contradiction to his letters of this period, to his autobiography, and to the testimony of Dr. Garnett. Patmore joined the Roman Church in 1864.

some indignation at a book that has been lately published in America by Thomas Powell; wherein himself, Tennyson, Browning, and others with whom he is not conscious of Powell's having ever met, are spoken of. Gabriel showed him *My Sister's Sleep*, which he approves in respect of sentiment, but says that it contains several lines that will not scan, and that it is too self-conscious in parts, as in the "I believe" of the first stanza, and in "I think that my lips did not stir."

P. 259. Wednesday, 20th December, 1849.

Patmore sent me his paper on Macbeth; which is devoted to showing that the idea of obtaining the crown was not suggested to Macbeth by the witches, but had been previously contemplated by him. It is very acute and well written and will fill some twenty pages.

P. 267. Thursday, 21st March, 1850.

I went to Patmore's with the proof of his *Macbeth*. He has got one out of some half-dozen copies of Tennyson's Elegies that have been printed strictly for private perusal; the publication of the work being postponed for some while, till about Christmas. Patmore says Tennyson is too lazy to go to Woolner's for his portrait, but will be at home for him any evening he may call. He learned Italian so as to be able to read Dante, Patmore says, in one fortnight's study. Patmore himself is desirous of making the experiment; and would, if he thought he could succeed equally well. He has been occupied the last month with his poem on Marriage,[1] of which however he has not meanwhile written a line; but, having meditated the matter, is now about to do so. He expresses himself quite confident of being able to keep it up at the same pitch as the few astonishing lines he has yet written, and which he read us some time ago. He is now anxious to have published as soon as possible his papers advocating certain principles in architecture, as the subject has of late been treated by others, and he is fearful of finding himself in a certain manner forestalled. He was a good deal struck with the quotations in my notice of *The Strayed Reveller*, and has also a great desire to hear Gabriel's *Bride-Chamber Talk*, of which he has heard Woolner and Millais speak.

[1] This resulted in "The Angel in the House."—Note by W. M. R.

P. 278. October 24th, 1850.

I heard from Patmore the other night that Tennyson, on being told that Millais was doing something from *The Woodman's Daughter*, observed, "I wish he'd do something from me."

P. 280. Tuesday, 27th October, 1850.

In the evening accompanied Woolner to Patmore's. Found that Woolner had just had a cast taken of his medallion head of Mrs. Patmore. . . . .

Patmore, when we arrived, was reading a translation by Charles Bagot Cayley, with whom I have lately become acquainted, of some cantos of the *Inferno*, left by me with Patmore, who promised to see whether *The Palladium* would be willing to publish it. He thinks very highly of the translation, and will write fully to the Editor on the subject. He had also just read Browning's *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* and is evidently deeply impressed with it—more than any other of the great man's works—though he does not exactly know "what to make of it."

P. 282. Sunday, 3rd November, 1850.

Spent the evening at Patmore's, with whom I left my notice of Allingham: his in *The Palladium* is out. . . . Patmore does not believe we have any really great men living in the region of pure intellect; not even Tennyson, though he might have thought him such, had he not written. He spoke of Gabriel's poem, *Dante in Exile*, which he considers full of fine things; the stanzas on Republics he admires particularly. He talks of keeping open house on every alternate Saturday, and has given me and all the P.R.B. a general invitation. . . .

P. 294. Sunday, February 2nd, 1851.

He (Woolner) with Gabriel and myself, spent the evening with Patmore on Saturday. Gabriel left some more of his translations from the Italian before Dante, which Patmore says are the only true love-poems he ever saw.

P. 302. Tuesday 13th,—Thursday 15th, May, 1851.

Ruskin's letter [see above, pp. 85, 86] will do good. Patmore, at whose instance it was written, thinks we should send Ruskin our thanks; but this seems of doubtful propriety, as it might be interpreted into making interest with a view to his second letter. When that is out, something of the kind suggested would certainly appear right.

CHAPTER VIII

PERSONAL TRAITS, 1844-1864

I HAVE endeavoured to recover from other sources than the foregoing extracts some idea of Coventry Patmore's personal aspect between the time of his father's more or less idealized description of him (pp. 45-48) and 1864, when I first became acquainted with him. The first description which comes to hand is a letter written by Mrs. Alfred Fryer at her husband's dictation to his friend Mr. Sutton, and is dated March 17, 1847:

"Alfred is on the sofa dictating to me with so much volubility, that I can scarcely hope to make this at all intelligible.—Rose.

"'We went to the museum the day after I (Alfred) came, and had a long talk with Patmore. He is not at all like the cove we took him for. He is very tall and slender. He came here on Sunday, and talked splendidly to us for four hours. We think more highly of him from his conversation than even from his poems, although we by no means agree with the doctrines he expresses. He sometimes hears Tennyson read his own poems, which he does in first-rate style, his voice being in some of its tones like a cathedral organ. Tennyson has two new volumes of poetry, which Coventry says are far superior, in as far as he is acquainted with them, to anything Tennyson has already published. Monckton Milnes is writing a life of Keats. Coventry says that "if Keats had lived ten years longer he would have been the greatest man we ever had"—perhaps he would except Shakespeare: he says Keats's letters are equal to the writings of Emerson, and resemble them. "Young and Old England" took Coventry three whole weeks of hard work to write. We think him very unassum-

ing and a capital fellow; he can laugh as heartily as you please! He looks very young, not as old as he is by three or four years, until he pulls his hat off; the forehead is broad and rather low, and his head small. He is not handsome, but has an interesting face. One would not think him a great man at first sight. We shall see him again in a day or two and then we can tell more about him. Rose and he had a small battle about religion, as you may fancy. He thinks of writing a poem to be *the* poem of the age, but half doubts his own powers. I tell him that *the* poem of the age *we* expect from his pen and that, it seems to me, he has quite genius enough to write it.'"

"Young and Old England" is the original title of a poem first published in Douglas Jerrold's "Illuminated Magazine." It was reprinted in "Tamerton Church Tower" as "Hope against Hope" and takes the form of a dialogue between a young and an old man, the former advocating a hopeful and Christian interpretation of the problems of the universe, while the latter asserts the position of an agnostic and pessimist. In all probability the poem represents discussions which took place between Coventry and his father, and indicates their several attitudes towards such questions.

A few weeks later Mrs. Fryer writes to Mr. Sutton:

"Alfred has not heard from Patmore so long—a week I think—that he has a great mind to believe the said Patmore must be ill."

The suspension of intercourse is, however, explained a month later, when Mr. Fryer writes:

"I saw friend Coventry for a moment only. He is going to be married to a Miss Andrews, a daughter of a dissenting minister. She is a most lovely girl, about twenty [she was actually just over twenty-three], knows Latin, Greek and French, and *his poems*. She can talk about everything, but, 'above all, has not associated much with *other girls*.'"

Mr. Aubrey de Vere has kindly furnished the following account of his earlier intercourse with Patmore. No dates are given, but it is obvious from the context that the acquaintance had commenced before Patmore began to write "The Angel in the House."

"Coventry Patmore began early to be well known as a poet, and by not a few warmly admired, although his first volume was hardly, I believe, a success. He was not discouraged; or at least I never heard him utter a complaint. I met him first at the house of the late Lord Houghton, who was always glad to cultivate the acquaintance of men of genius, whether recognized as such or not; and I quickly noted in him several signs that he was among those sure to be recognized. One of these signs of genius is its extreme simplicity, while another is that of an ardent yet not noisy enthusiasm. But these characteristics make it often more difficult than it would otherwise be to describe a man adequately. A simple character makes its quiet influence quickly and deeply felt; while, on the other hand, an artificial and complex one suggests more than may be said about it. Those who met Burns or Keats were, it is probable, strongly though gently drawn towards them, but might perhaps have said in but a few words all that could be profitably said respecting them.

"We met frequently in London, and I was early impressed by the originality of his remarks, and also by the sensitive and impassioned character of his intellect. Whatever he thought he felt also. One evening I brought him to a small gathering at the Uplands, the residence of my friend Henry Taylor, whose poetry he greatly valued for its union of strength with refinement. He evidently enjoyed himself there; and, when he and his son, a young boy at the Blue-coat school, had to rush out into the summer darkness to catch the last London omnibus, his departure was much regretted by all present, though he made no effort to interest them. He had spoken of Tennyson with great and just admiration, and of Wordsworth with a profound reverence; and in both cases what he had thought he had obviously felt also. Someone had remarked that after twenty years of ridicule and ten more of 'faint praise' it

was only in his old age that Wordsworth's Poetry had become appreciated. Patmore replied, 'His poetry has come at last to be admired; but before its full greatness comes to be appreciated, at least two centuries must have passed away.'

"His life was a bright one, though his worldly circumstances were narrow and precarious, and though he had to work hard upon other labours besides the poetic. During his early days of trial Patmore lived in a small house in that beautiful spot, Hampstead, and there, on several warm summer evenings, I visited him and his first wife and joined them in their walk among the fragrant lanes and hedges adjoining it and Highgate, a region which, though within three or four miles of London, retains still large remnants of a rural grace long vanished from neighbourhoods fifty times more remote. We talked of the great men who had walked there in old times—especially of Coleridge, far the greatest of them, Leigh Hunt, a true poet and a zealous lover of poets, then also resident there, who in his 'Feast of the Poets' had assigned to Coleridge as an emblem gift from Apollo a characteristic one commingling Mandragora and Balm."

The following description belongs to a somewhat later date. It was printed in Nathaniel Hawthorne's posthumous work, "English Note-books" (pp. 390-392). I cannot refrain from giving the beautiful letter in which his widow asks leave to include the reminiscence:

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"I have been copying Mr. Hawthorne's English journal for the Press, and near its close there is a passage about you, which I should like to retain if you are willing. I suppose you remember the call you made upon us in Great Russell Street in 1858; for we never forgot it—and regretted deeply that we met you so late, when we might have known you in all those weeks we were detained in London. I feel an infinite obligation to you for your Poems. —Upon my return to England, after a dreary absence in Portugal, when I arrived in Liverpool and expressed my excessive fatigue and exasperation at such a long separation, my husband put 'The Angel in the House' into my hand, saying that I should be refreshed and enchanted, and

forget all my vexations by reading it. I cannot express to you my enjoyment of it. It seemed to me like a beautiful Grecian Temple lighted up with Gods and Goddesses, a pure, white, heavenly splendour pervading everywhere, and the repose of a better life brought down into this. The Preludes seemed like lovely Porticos of fair columns of perfect grace—But it is of no use for me to go on. I had found something new, fresh and of a statuesque beauty tinted with living colour, too—I exclaimed, 'Who and where is this true Poet?' We took to Rome the vols. you brought or sent for a New Year's gift to Mr. Hawthorne, and had them bound in beautiful Roman vellum, as the best honor we could externally render them, and we have brought the book to Dresden and it lies before me now.

"I will copy and enclose the passage in the journal, which I will expunge from my manuscript if you say so. But I hope you will not. Mr. Browning has given me permission to retain a passage about himself and Mrs. Browning—with their names in full. You also belong to the world by the right of Genius.

We are living in Dresden for two or three years, and, if you travel to the continent, I trust you will come to see your true lovers—though the chief inducement—the presence of Mr. Hawthorne—I can no longer offer. I greatly wonder that I am still in this world, lent yet—while our children need me, I am willing—as this is for a moment, and an Eternal life with him is in store for me. I have never for one instant felt separated from him—or I could not have existed here at all. To you I say this—for are not you the Sacred Poet of perfect married life?

"With very great regard I am,

"Sincerely yours,

"SOPHIA HAWTHORNE.

"Dresden, June 14th, 1869.

"46B, 3rd Etage, Bautzner Strasse."

"P.S.—It is such rare praise from Mr. Hawthorne to call a poem 'most beautiful and original' considering the careful, conscientious and modified way in which he always awarded praise of poets—that I remark it as almost a *solitary* instance in your regard."

The following is the passage enclosed (the date is Jan. 3rd, 1858):

"On Thursday we had the pleasure of a call from Mr. Coventry Patmore, to whom Dr. Wilkinson gave me a letter of introduction, and on whom I had called twice at the British Museum, without finding him. We had read his 'Betrothal' and 'Angel in the House' with unusual pleasure and sympathy, and therefore were very glad to make his personal acquaintance. He is a man of much more youthful aspect than I had expected—a slender person to be an Englishman, though not remarkably so, had he been an American—with an intelligent, pleasant and sensitive face, a man very evidently of refined feelings and cultivated mind. He is very simple and agreeable in his manners; a little shy, yet perfectly frank, and easy to meet on real grounds. He said that his wife had purposed to come with him, and had, indeed, accompanied him to town, but was kept away. We were very sorry for this, because Mr. Patmore seems to acknowledge her as the real 'Angel in the House,' although he says she herself ignores all connection with the poem. It is well for her to do so, and for her husband to feel that the character is her real portrait; and both, I suppose, are right. It is a most beautiful and original poem—a poem for happy married people to read together, and to understand by the light of their own past and present life; but I doubt whether the generality of English people are capable of appreciating it. I told Mr. Patmore that I thought his popularity in America would be greater than at home, and he said that it was already so; and he appeared to estimate highly his American fame, and also our general gift of quicker and more subtle recognition of genius than the English public.

"We mutually gratified each other by expressing high admiration of one another's works, and Mr. Patmore regretted that in the few days of our further stay here we should not have time to visit him at his home. It would really give me pleasure to do so. I expressed a hope of seeing him in Italy during our residence there, and he seemed to think it possible, as his friend and our countryman, Thomas Buchanan Reed, had asked him to come thither and be his guest.

"He took his leave, shaking hands with all of us because he saw that we were his own people, recognizing him as a true poet. He has since given me the new edition of his poems, with a kind note."

Of his personal habits at this time some particulars can be recorded. The habit of night walks, which he retained till a very few days before his death, was already established. Mr. Fryer writes to Henry Sutton, March 22, 1847, that "he went to see Coventry at his own house, arriving there by nine o'clock and staying with him till one a.m.; that Coventry then walked with him home, so that Fryer spent another hour in his company and that Patmore would have kept him talking for two hours more if he had been willing; that the conversation was chiefly about Patmore's book on art;" also that Coventry had a "nice good-natured brother living with him."

The brother was Gurney Eugene. The book on art was destined never to see the light, at any rate as a complete work. Not long after this, as is shown by Patmore's letters to Mr. Henry Sutton, he appears to have conceived for art a capricious distaste, which, though of short duration, may have resulted in the destruction of what he had so far written on the subject.

Of his home habits as a student it may be related that, although he always took great pleasure in seeing his house well and comfortably furnished, he preferred his own study to be quite monastic in its plainness. In his early married days he always chose for his own room an attic of the house in which he might be living, had it whitewashed and supplied with two or three wooden armchairs, a common sofa, a very scant supply of books, and a writing table. To this room he only took his most particular friends for talks. He did not indulge in tobacco in his youth: he invariably found that sitting in a room with others smoking gave him a headache, so that to be asked by him to smoke while talking was the greatest sign of friendship. Although he

had always been a great reader, he was never fond of having many books in his own study; the few he had most frequently in use were generally kept out of his sight, except that on which he was engaged for the time. He usually placed his book on a table while reading, only touching it with his hands when turning over a leaf. This fastidiousness has caused him to say more than once, "I could not make —— a friend. Did you see how careless he was with that book?"

The somewhat ascetic character of his "sanctum" was preserved to the last. So too was the habit of having but few books about him, though his library was considerable. He had inherited books from his father and his great-uncle; his second wife brought many to his home; and numbers of works were presented to him by their authors; but when I knew him he seldom had more than a score or so of books at hand, and these were mostly the liturgical manuals of his own Communion, some few works of the Fathers and of his favourite philosophers, and a novel or two for relaxation.

As regards tobacco, his habits and tastes underwent a complete revolution. So far as I remember, he smoked little, if at all, until in 1875 he went to live at Hastings. From that time he not only smoked incessantly, but seemed surprised if his guest failed to follow suit. He told me that even if his physician were to tell him that the habit was shortening his life he should hesitate to smoke less, for "time was not to be measured by years but by thought; and tobacco was especially conducive to fruitful meditation."

These observations from without may well be supplemented by the following memoranda, which reveal his inner life. They were written in 1861.

"*Mem. for Prayer.*

"*Thanksgiving.*—For creation to the capacity of eternally enjoying a happiness which shall exceed, if I obtain it, those few brief heights of joy which are the lights of my life.

"For preservation through the innumerable known and unknown dangers of thirty-seven years.

"For preservation, during that period, of baptismal grace, whereby, notwithstanding all my miserable failures and incredible relapses, I am still urged and persuaded and more or less empowered to live the life of truth and faith in Christ.

"For the extraordinary number, greatness and obviousness of God's external providences during that time.

"For my dear Wife. For all the innumerable blessings, known and unknown, of her most amiable companionship for fourteen years. For her simplicity, her admirable judgment, her effective and unobtrusive godliness, her beauty and personal delightfulness, her equal temper, her warm and unwavering affection to me. For her wonderful restoration to my prayers and those which were offered up by others, when she was wholly given up by all the physicians. For the great increase of our love through the many active proofs and exercises of love produced by her long danger, which is not yet over, though very much diminished. For the greater and more sensible tenderness which the precarious tenure of her life causes between us. For the family of beautiful and promising children I have by her.

"For our many friends, good for help, example, and society.

"For my honourable office, and for my gifts as a poet, and the discovery of a subject on which those gifts can be employed with the prospect of great good to the world and profit and honourable reputation to myself and wife and children.

"For the redemption of the world by the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Christ; and for the means of grace, whereby I in particular shall certainly be saved if I use the ability and opportunities which God has no less certainly given me of taking them.

"For the particular blessings, temporal and spiritual, of the last few hours, days, and weeks.

"For exemption from any great distress, grief, pain, or dishonour.

Petitions.

"That I may owe no man anything but love; and, to that end, may have health, diligence, and success in work, and in all right means of seeking worldly advantage.

"That, in my conduct to my wife, I may become more and more chaste, affectionate, tender, just, courtly, and actively pleasing and benevolent.

"That I may not, for want of thought or activity, omit any occasion of good to our children. That I may have a more tender feeling of their weakness, and not be angry if I do not find in them the moral powers which are often wanting in myself.

"That I may be faithful in word and act to my friends, and reciprocate their goodness as far as I am able.

"That I may be gentle, true, and good-willing towards all with whom I have intercourse and influence, especially my colleagues in office.

"That I may be enabled to write my poetry from immediate perception of the truth and delight of love at once divine and human, and that all events may so happen as shall best advance this my chief work and probable means of working out my own salvation.

"That Emily and I may be preserved in life and health to the temporal and eternal good and happiest reunion in heaven of ourselves and our children.

"That Emily may be continually blessed with the consolation, peace, and joy of the Holy Ghost, and that all happiness may be upon her in this world and the next.

"That the evil tendencies of our children may be checked and removed by God's all-powerful and unexpectedly working grace.

"*That my conscience may become healthier and more proportionate.*

"That I may learn to speak little, and that truly, kindly, and without any hypocritical or scandalous inconsistency with my life.

"For the peace of God which passeth, that is, is more intelligent than, all understanding.

"For prudence to seek out the best helps to religion, in friends and books, and to waste no time on unprofitable acquaintances, newspaper-reading, etc.

"For an abiding belief and knowledge of the all-import-

ant fact that I actually have from God the power of willing to obey Him in all things He requires of me.

"For understanding and right humility, not to impose on myself burthens beyond commanded obedience, but thankfully and joyfully to take permitted delights, comforts, reliefs, and freedoms.

"May, 1861."

CHAPTER IX

SELF-EDUCATION IN THE POETIC ART

THE perusal of Patmore's letters and of the prose work which he wrote for various periodicals leads me to the conclusion that it was about 1846 that he attained to intellectual maturity (though his mental development ended only with his life), and that it was then too that he first entered on a close and scientific study of the principles of poetic art. It is evident that he had rapidly outgrown the stage of thought, feeling and method that had produced the earlier poems, which he now condemns both for sentiment and for style. The gulf which in every branch of art divides the amateur from the artist is nowhere wider than in poetry. The poetic is as truly a "mystery" as any art, and its secrets are possibly even less comprehensible to the layman than those of music, architecture, painting or sculpture. The proverb, "Poeta nascitur non fit," like many proverbs, is half truth, half falsehood. Every true poet was born to be a poet; but none have ever fully entered into their birthright of genius without close and accurate study of the principles and methods of their art. Patmore's early poems are full of such felicities as may come from a mere natural gift unsupported by adequate training; equally full of inequalities and crudities, the tendency to which careful discipline alone can correct.

He soon came to recognize with Coleridge that poetry "had a logic of its own, as severe as that of

science, and more difficult because more subtle, more complex and dependent on more and more fugitive causes"; that there ought to be "a reason, not only for every word, but for the position of every word." It would be impossible to find an attempt at closer analysis of such laws than the following extract from a review of Tennyson's "Princess." Then and later Coleridge seemed to Patmore the best master among moderns of the poetic art, both by theoretic teaching and by example, setting, as he held, in the few poems which were worthy of his genius, the highest standard of accomplishment.

"Another means of suggestion which is scarcely less frequently employed in high poetry, although its employment is less generally felt and is seldom distinctly recognized by critics, consists in the choice of words, the letters of which convey subtle resemblances of sound to the matter expressed. Out of the innumerable examples which suggest themselves, we select a well-known couplet from Coleridge's 'Christabel':

> 'The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
> Amid their own white ashes lying.'

Here the cold vowels *a*, *i*, *o*, are the only ones which are openly sounded, and of these *a* is repeated five times, and *i* three times, the *e* in the short *the*, preceding, as it does, the long syllable *brand*, is scarcely heard; the ear is wholly occupied with the eight cold vowels which occur in the long syllables of the eight feet that constitute these lines. The only effect of warmth is a very slight one, produced by the rapid succession of the consonants *b*, *r*, and *n*, *d* in the word *brand*. Again, there is an effect of weight conveyed by the word *brand*, and to this effect we are invited to attend, by the repetition of it, and by the first juxtaposition and contrast of this word with other words, conveying the notion of softness and lightness; finally the two ideas of lightness and weight are united, and the effect completed by the word *amid*, in which the sound passing through the soft *m* and its indistinct vowels, concludes in a heavy *d*; and completes to a delicate ear and a prepared mind, the entire

picture of the weighty and smouldering brands, sunken through the light mass of ashes which remains after their undisturbed combustion. If the almost magically picturesque effect which all will allow to be conveyed by this couplet be not due to these reasons, to what does it owe its origin? Explicable origin or reason, of one kind or another, there must be for every effect of this nature. And if these reasons be admitted, they must also be confessed to have been intended. To imagine that an extensive and co-operating set of effects in art can have arisen without a first and intelligent, as well as a final and intelligible cause, were scarcely less stupid than atheism."

I think, however, that Patmore would in later years (even had he then endorsed this earlier criticism), have modified the view here expressed that Coleridge had, in writing the passage analyzed, been fully conscious of all the elements of effect.

Patmore, as has been already recorded, had the ambition to write "what was to be *the* poem of the day"; but felt that nothing short of prolonged and severe study would enable him to succeed. His marriage was, as I shall hope to show, initiating him more and more deeply into his chosen subject, and meanwhile his main interest was to master the poetic art in all its intricacy. How completely this aim occupied his thoughts is shown, not merely by the essay on "English Metrical Critics" (see note, p. 109), but also in most of the numerous articles which he wrote during these years, 1846—1862. So completely is his mind devoted to the abstract laws of poetic art that, when he is reviewing contemporary poets, the reader often has to read page after page of theory before he comes to the actual subject, which is often disposed of in a brief and somewhat perfunctory manner. It is evident that it was his own poetic education which was the main object of his thoughts, and that the verses he was reviewing were not much more to him than the occasion for an

essay on the all-absorbing subject. It is possible too to discern in these articles a continuous development of the mysticism which came later to take so complete possession of his imagination. I have mentioned elsewhere (p. 182) how he endeavours, in reviewing Tennyson's "Princess," to read into it an occult meaning, and how it was, in all probability, the ultimate conviction that this poem would not bear such an interpretation, and that Tennyson's work showed no progress on the lines on which his own thought was developing, that led to a diminution of interest and sympathy as of poet with poet.

Even on these conditions Patmore found reviewing an irksome task. He had, as has been seen, dreaded the idea of becoming a "magazine hack," a fate from which his appointment to the Museum had rescued him. The smallness of his means however made it necessary for him to increase his income by writing for periodicals; but as soon as he was well embarked upon poetic work, he relieved himself of this necessity by reducing his expenses, letting his house and living in lodgings; thus securing for poetry his whole thought and leisure.[1]

This is, I think, a fair account of his relation to current literature during these years of poetic incuba-

[1] Of his talk on the engrossing subject, besides the records preserved by the Præ-Raphaelites, I can find but one record. Dr. Garnett, in the obituary notice which he contributed to the "Saturday Review," speaks of a long series "of conversations, in which I learned lessons invaluable for prose as well as verse. All the faults to which a young writer is most prone found in him a severe censor and an unanswerable antagonist. The subordination of parts to the whole, the necessity of every part of a composition being in keeping with all the others, the equal importance of form with matter, absolute truth to nature, sobriety in simile and metaphor, the wisdom of maintaining a reserve of power—these and kindred maxims were enforced with an emphasis most salutary to a young hearer just beginning to write in the heyday of the 'spasmodic school.'"

tion. I must, however, deprecate any idea of disparaging these prose writings of his. They appear to me, notwithstanding the indications of detachment which I have noted, to attain a high standard of excellence on their own lines. The style indeed lacks the nervous energy and distinction shown by his later prose work, but the articles are almost always marked by originality and maturity of thought and by careful and fair critical judgment. I am precluded from cataloguing them by the following letter to Mr. Buxton Forman:

"Hastings, July 18, 1886.

"DEAR SIR,

"I was in error about the Museum appointment. It was in 1846. I was educated at home. Between 1846 and 1862 I wrote a great many articles in the Edinburgh, North British, British, and National (Quarterly) Review, and in other periodicals; but the only Papers I desire to have my name connected with are, an article 'on the Sources of Expression in Architecture' in the Edinburgh; 'English Metrical Critics' in the North British (1856 I believe) reprinted in my collected poems; a paper on the 'Ethics of Art' either in the 'British' or 'North British,' I forget which, and I think about the year 1850 or 1851; 'Madame de Hautefort and her Contemporaries' in the National Review, 1856 I think; an Article on 'Shakespeare,' beginning 'The Drama of Shakespeare was an invention of his own,' either in British or North British, I think in latter, within a year or two of 1850.

"Yours faithfully,

"C. PATMORE."[1]

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[1] "Sources of Expression in Architecture" takes the form of a review of Ruskin's "Seven Lamps" and "Stones of Venice," vol. i. ("Edinburgh Review" for 1851, 94. 365). From it and other articles Patmore subsequently compiled the papers entitled "Architectural Styles," which appear in "Principle in Art." "English Metrical Critics" appeared in the "North British Review" for 1857 (27. 127), and is printed in "Amelia" as a "Prefatory Study of English Metrical Law"; "Ethics of Art" is in the "British

In connection with the essay last mentioned, I may relate that Patmore always disputed the theory of the complete "objectivity" of Shakespeare, and thought that his personality was by no means so completely hidden as has been generally maintained. He also held him to be a great moral teacher, finding that in almost all the plays reward and penalty are meted out to the characters according to their fidelity to or deviation from a central law of conduct. This article, like some others, is really a portion or a condensation of a more complete work which Patmore had planned and almost completed. Similarly the "book on art" (p. 100) and a projected work on architecture, for the issue of which he had actually been in treaty with a publisher, were divided up or reduced, and reappeared in the form of Quarterly articles. The history of the projected work on Shakespeare is given in a letter of Robert Browning to Elizabeth Barrett:[1]

"I was at Mrs. Procter's last night. Kinglake and Chorley, with a little of Milnes and Coventry Patmore . . . Patmore told me in his quiet way that his criticisms—his book on which he had been expending a world of pains—is altogether superseded by the appearance of 'Ulrici on Shakespeare'—the very words of many of his more important paragraphs are the same. *That* astounds one a little, does it not?"

I may remark, in passing, that the opinions expressed in the prose writings of this period, whether in letters or in published articles, are in general accord with those which Patmore held in later life.

Quarterly" for 1849 (10. 441). "Madame de Hautefort and her Contemporaries" occurs in the "National Review" for 1856 (3. 317), and is reprinted in "Religio Poetæ." The article on "Shakspeare" is in the "North British Review" for 1849 (12. 115).

[1] "Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett," vol. ii., p. 135.

So far as the same ground is covered there is but little change of opinion between 1846, when his more mature ideas are first recorded, and 1880 when "Principles in Art" appeared, the superiority of the later criticism being manifest mainly in increased pregnancy of thought and felicity of expression.

Patmore's essay on Metre seems to me, and to others more competent to judge, to be, for the time at which it was written, a remarkable contribution to the subject, superseding and almost revolutionizing previous theory, and showing his power of penetrating to essential principles. No doubt its efficiency is somewhat impaired by concentration and by being insufficiently illustrated by examples, so that it is somewhat hard reading for any but the expert, if not even for him. Patmore himself, writing to a friend to whom he sent the essay on its re-publication, asks half humorously "Do you understand it? I am not sure that I do;" a remark which can apply only to the detail, as the general theory, that of isometric intervals marked by the recurrence of *ictus*, is thoroughly and intelligibly developed. So too is the law of *catalexis*, a principle which in later life Patmore appeared to me to carry beyond due bounds, maintaining that it was of the essence of all, even of blank verse. But as regards very many forms of metre I believe him to have been right, Tennyson's clever skit upon one portion of the essay notwithstanding. The passage referred to in Tennyson's letter is as follows:

"The six-syllable 'iambic' is the most solemn of all our English measures. It is scarcely fit for anything but a dirge; the reason being, that the first pause in this measure is greater, when compared with the length of the line, than in any other verse. Here is an example which I select on account of the peculiar illustration of its nature as a 'dimeter brachycatalectic' which is supplied by the *filling up* of the measure in the seventh line:

'How strange it is to wake
And watch, while others sleep,
Till sight and hearing ache
For objects that may keep
The awful inner sense
Unroused, lest it should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
And horror of the dark.'"

The lines quoted are taken from a comparatively early poem of Patmore's entitled "Night and Sleep," reprinted from Fraser, February, 1854, in "Tamerton Church Tower." He continues:

"We have only to *fill up* the measure in every line as well as in the seventh in order to change this verse from the slowest and most mournful to the most rapid and high-spirited of all English metres, the common 'eight syllable quatrain.'"

On this Tennyson writes as follows:

"MY DEAR C. P.

... Specimen of the '*most solemn*' English metre:

'How glad I am to walk
With Susan on the shore!
How glad I am to talk!
I kiss her o'er and o'er.
I clasp her slender waist,
We kiss, we are so fond,
When she and I are thus embraced
There's not a joy beyond.

Is this C.P.'s most solemn?

'Specimen of the "*most high-spirited*" metre,

'How strange it is, O God, to wake,
To watch and wake while others sleep,
Till heart and sight and hearing ache
For common objects that would keep
Our awful inner ghostly sense
Unroused, lest it by chance should mark
The life that haunts the emptiness
And horrors of the formless dark.

'Is this C.P's rapid and high-spirited? A. T."

This clever attempt to turn the tables on Patmore must not, I think, be taken too seriously. The first "specimen" seems to be a *jeu d'esprit* similar to that often performed by musicians who by a change of time transform a "Dead March" into a jig, or a comic song into a dirge—without however seriously compromising the fitness for their several purposes of the original forms. The second specimen seems distinctly to have lost in solemnity by the "filling up" of the suppressed syllables. The letter is quoted in Lord Tennyson's life of his father.

Though so close a student of the poetic art in all its branches, Patmore was never, in one sense, a metrist, that is to say, he never seems to have inclined towards intricate metrical schemes. The only poems of his which show any approach to formal elaboration are a single sonnet and some verses entitled "Little Edith. II.," beginning "I say, 'I must amend me'". The latter were originally printed in "Fraser," as were two other poems on the same subject, and this and the sonnet are reprinted in "Tamerton Church Tower." So far as I know, Patmore never wrote another sonnet, and indeed held that sonnet writing was a mistake, "the game not being worth the candle." Otherwise he wrote almost exclusively in "Iambic" feet, adopting in earlier life, for the most part, varieties of the ordinary rhymed couplet, while later, in the Odes and "Amelia", he imparted freedom and complexity to a verse, still entirely of "Iambics," by greatly varying the length of the line and letting the rhyme fall at unequal intervals—both length of line and distribution of rhyme being ruled by a law that defies analysis.

Between the immature early poems and the "Angel in the House," to the writing of which all Patmore's technical training was being devoted,

appeared, in 1853, "Tamerton Church Tower", which may be regarded as a sort of "preliminary canter" to the later poem. Indeed it includes two poems—"Ladies' Praise" and "Love's Apology"—which were afterwards incorporated in the "Angel." Patmore sent the volume to Carlyle and received from him a most cordial and encouraging letter which is printed, with others of his, in vol. ii.

The external setting of the poem which gives its name to the volume is derived from recollections of an expedition to Cornwall made in company with a friend, a son of Sir Goldsworthy Gurney, who had a place in the Duchy. I have not been able to ascertain the exact date of this journey: it must however have been before 1845; and it is recorded that the friend in whose company it was made was of a somewhat different type from those with whom Patmore usually associated. These were for the most part poets and literary men, whereas Mr. Gurney was, as the poem indicates, more like the ordinary man-of-the-world. He does not appear in Patmore's correspondence, nor is there any direct evidence that P. G. Patmore had been a friend of the eminent inventor and had named his youngest son after him, though this seems probable. The principal feminine characters pourtrayed are both relatives of Emily Patmore's—"Ruth," a younger sister, and "Blanche," a niece—the resemblance in the latter case being, as Emily Patmore points out (p. 154), merely physical.

The principal poem, though showing a very substantial advance upon the earlier work both in subject and in form, still seems in both respects to fall far short of that which was to succeed it. The verse is less felicitous; the description of one at least of the female characters and the love-making generally less delicate and refined. As regards technique Patmore was to make substantial advance in the

interval; while, for subject, every year spent with his wife Emily was initiating him more and more into the "infinite mystery and delicacy" of marriage. That she was the inspiration of his greater poem, that with her were associated all the most poignant experiences of his life, whether of joy or sorrow, is no secret; but the precise nature and extent of her influence on him and on his thought and work can only be determined by a study of her character and life.

CHAPTER X

EMILY AUGUSTA PATMORE

I.

"To the Memory of her by whom and for whom I became a Poet."

FOR every sympathetic reader of "The Angel in the House" a special interest will attach to the poet's first wife, of whom the words quoted above, the dedication to this poem, seem to be literally true. Though Patmore was already, both by idiosyncrasy and, as he believed, almost by a supernatural command, devoted to the praise of womanhood and of nuptial love, he could not conceivably have accomplished his task as he has done had he remained without personal experience of married life, or had the partner of his earlier manhood been less qualified to serve as a revelation to him of the perfection to which a woman, as wife and mother, may attain.

Nevertheless it is, as I think, by misapprehension of Patmore's main intention in the poem that many have been led to seek and to find in it a definite portrait of his wife. There is of course an obvious departure from the actual in the circumstances of the heroine—such a shifting of the scenery as second-rate artists often think sufficient to establish as an original creation what is really a mere study from life. But though Patmore, by altering the *milieu*—changing the father-in-law of the lady to an Anglican dean from a Nonconformist minister, substituting affluence for slender means, and other minor changes—doubtless intended to divorce the study from actual fact, he has not limited himself to mere external difference,

Emily Augusta Patmore.

from a portrait by Sir J.E. Millais, P.R.A. (1851)

but it has been his consistent purpose to present a perfect picture of womanhood by means of knowledge revealed to him through his wife. She was to the poet as a model is to the painter of the ideal; but with this exception to an artist's usual experience, that there was no need to improve upon her. To idealize, in the sense of raising from a lower to a higher standard within the limits of humanity, was impossible. He could do no more than generalize; avoiding in the main direct portraiture as well in personality as in circumstance.

Such I have, from merely internal evidence, always held to have been his design; and this view is confirmed by the fact that none of the very few people living who knew Emily Augusta Patmore well can point to more than a few passages in "The Angel" which appear to them to represent her personality. I also find in a diary of Patmore's, written after her death, the following heading: "Passages of 'The Angel in the House' which more particularly describe or apply to her." This is all: the passages were never transcribed. But the entry appears to me to imply—a very moderate space being left between this and the next—that he would have found but a few quotations which embody direct portraiture. This view too is more definitely confirmed by the following extract from one of his letters to his wife:

"Mrs. Ruskin seemed to think that the Poem did you the highest honour, saying, in answer to *my denial of personality*, that it was impossible for a man to write such a poem without an admirable wife."

Dr. Garnett, in the graceful tribute to her memory which he included in his obituary notice of Coventry Patmore,[1] says, "Her appearance is well described by her husband when he sings:

[1] "Saturday Review," Dec. 5, 1896.

"Her Norman face,
Her large brown eyes, clear lakes of Love."[1]

This no doubt would have been one of the passages transcribed in the diary; and even had there been many others given, I should still hold to the opinion that, although, in spite of the poet's intention to avoid portraiture, his love for her had occasionally forced his hand, it had not done so frequently enough to compromise the main design of the poem, or to effect a transition from the general to the particular.

But, if Emily Patmore is to be held by the readers of the poem mainly as the model for a picture of ideal womanhood, she was also much more than this. She was to the poet as would be to the painter a model

[1] The quotation is evidently from memory. I give the passage more in full, and as it was printed, for the whole (especially the first seven words), is descriptive of Emily Patmore:

. . . "In shape, no slender Grace
But Venus, milder than the dove;
Her mother's air: her Norman face,
Her large, sweet eyes, clear lakes of love."

It must be admitted that the impression produced on her acquaintance by Emily Patmore was not uniformly that which is indicated by this quotation. To some she appears to have assumed an aspect of "immobility," both in appearance and manner. Mr. Gosse records that Mrs. Carlyle "extending a catlike paw, accused her of always trying to look like a medallion" (probably the actual words used were "*the* medallion," meaning that by Woolner); and though I should be glad to acquit Mrs. Carlyle of an additional asperity (she has plenty to answer for, and this does not appear to have been one of the most intelligent), I think the sarcasm was actually uttered, and that it tallied with a certain mien which Emily Patmore presented to a limited number of her friends. A passage in Browning's verses given below (p. 149) seems to confirm this impression, though the exact meaning is none too obvious, and it might be taken in an uncomplimentary sense which was certainly not intended. But so far as Mrs. Carlyle's remark implies self-consciousness or *pose*, it may be pronounced to be completely and almost stupidly unjust. The evidence that Emily Patmore was exceptionally simple and natural is overwhelming.

EMILY AUGUSTA PATMORE.

From a medallion by T. Woolner, R.A.

who could inspire, suggest, direct, criticize, and herself supply touches of substantial value. Patmore pays a tribute to "the subtilty and severity of her taste in poetry, to which 'The Angel' owes whatever completeness it has, not to mention many of the best thoughts, which stand *verbatim* as she gave them me;" and in absence, while he had the work in hand, she was always thinking of it, trying to find for him new thoughts, on which it is evident from the correspondence that he largely depended for his material; while many of her letters to him, obviously written without conscious aim at helping his work, abound in passages which have evidently suggested many of the best and most delicate appreciations of feminine nature which the poem contains. To him she was literally "Love's self, so Love's interpreter," possessing not merely the elementary feelings of perfect womanhood, but also, what is far more rare, the power of expressing them and making them intelligible to a man; while her complete candour, the candour of an innocence which has nothing to conceal, made full self-revelation possible and even easy to her.

To me at least it always seemed that Patmore had obtained a far deeper insight into the feminine soul than is given to any but a very few men; nor do I think that this is more largely due to his natural qualifications for his task than to the privilege of a specially close union, both of heart and mind, with a wife of unusual power and delicacy of feeling. It was in fact the combination of original interest and discernment with exceptional advantages of circumstance that served to raise him above most of those masculine writers who have had similar aims. Scarcely ever can a poet have owed to his wife so large a debt.

II.

In my endeavour to compose some record of Emily Augusta Patmore, I have thought it well to give precedence to her influence on her husband's poem, as it will be in this connection that she will primarily be a subject of interest to most readers. But this aspect of her is by no means the only one which is worthy of being commemorated. Unfortunately the material available is anything but abundant. Though but thirty-seven years have passed since her death, and though, were she alive, she would not even now have reached extreme old age, few of those who knew her well survive to furnish recollections. This is partly due to the fact that many of Patmore's associates during the years of his first marriage were substantially his elders, and also because the circle admitted to intimacy was by no means wide.

By far the larger part of the available material is contained in records in Patmore's own hand; the diary in which, both before and immediately after his wife's death, he recorded events, feelings, and aspirations connected with her; extracts from their correspondence which he transcribed; the touching little memoir of her mother, written at the request of a friend by the eldest daughter while still a child; and some few letters of her own to various correspondents. There are also the two little books which she published—one of verses for children, by "Mrs. Motherly," which I find was very popular with those who were children thirty years ago; the other a prose volume called "The Servants' Behaviour Book," which, written in a clear, direct style, free from all artifice and affectation, gives proof of a sympathetic power to enter into the difficulties and trials of another class.

Of these records Patmore's own diary is of course

far the most valuable, overflowing as it is with tender devotion, with heart-searching pathos, and with the most intimate self-revelation; and it is of further interest because it embodies the germs of many of the finest "Odes," which were written none much less than six years after his bereavement: so permanent were the impressions then received.

The years of sorrow which followed her death were the seed-time of his highest poetry; and, if in her lifetime his wife was so largely the inspirer of the earlier work, love for her, consecrated by death, is proved by these records to have germinated into his highest thought and his loftiest verse. Indeed it is not too much to assert that the great change which all students of Patmore's poems must recognize, both in form and idea, between the earlier and the later verse—between "The Angel in the House," together with all which preceded it, and the "Odes,"—is due to his loss, and represents the transition from Love in earthly fruition to Love in the realm of spiritual aspiration, in which sphere it becomes more and more closely identified with that Divine Love which is the main and almost exclusive subject of his later work. The new ideal required and suggested a new form of poetic expression, which it found in the free and lofty music of the "Odes."

The records I have alluded to are of too intimate a nature to be used otherwise than sparingly and with discretion. The diary mentioned seems to have been intended for Patmore's own exclusive use. Still I cannot believe that he would have grudged its employment for the purpose of doing honour to his wife's memory, nor do I see how else the extreme tenderness of his affection and the loyalty of his love can be shown and proved. Apart from these memorials such qualities could be merely taken on trust, or deduced from his poems; and it is notorious

that poetry does not necessarily embody the actual experience of the writer. The book in which the correspondence is copied is entitled by Patmore "Liber Amoris," and gives a picture of married love which can seldom have been equalled; for though one may hope that similar affection is not unprecedented, there cannot often have been, on both sides, an equal power of expression.

It is strange that the title should be the same as that given to Hazlitt's letters, with which Patmore and his father are both, though so differently, associated; and I cannot resist the conclusion that he had chosen the name with the deliberate purpose of emphasizing the contrast. In this case at least there can be no similar motive for reticence. No moral injury could result from the revelation of this chaste and constant passion; but it may be an even greater crime to tear the veil from a sanctuary than to lift the lid of a dust-bin. If the more sceptical reader inclines to discount the testimony of one who was a fervent lover in life and in death, I can only reply that this constant and ever-increasing devotion to a wife and to her memory on the part of a man like Patmore, who cannot be supposed by those who knew him to have ever been other than critical and autocratic, if not exacting, is in itself no slight evidence of her desert; and also that all who remember her confirm the essential truth of her husband's tribute.

Dr. Garnett describes her thus: "This admirable lady . . . impressed me . . . as a Queen ruling by Love and Wisdom,

> 'A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food,'

wise, witty, frank, gracious, hospitable, without flaw or blemish that I could ever discover, but perfectly at home in this terrestrial sphere"; and this picture

of her is but a more skilful expression of the testimony given by others. The adoration for her of the daughters who survive has never suffered by lapse of time, and, even in later years, any resemblance to her in another has at once attracted their friendship as nothing else could do.

It is scarcely surprising that one endowment which Emily Patmore undoubtedly possessed, that of wit and humour, should not have been fully illustrated by her husband. He does indeed record "her admirable wit and humour in expressing suddenly and epigrammatically an apt truth," but gives no instances. The omission is assuredly not due to any insensitiveness on his part, for he was exceptionally appreciative of such qualities in others. Rather must it be ascribed to the circumstances under which these memorials were written, in which examples of the gift might have appeared to sound a discordant note. Dr. Garnett, who has in the passage quoted above described her as "witty," tells me that she had once designed a story for children (I do not know that it was ever written) of which the subject was to be a race of men with tails; which appendages, being less under control than the facial muscles, were to make hypocrisy impossible. If, for example, a story of a friend's misfortunes actually aroused pleasurable sensations in the hearer, it would be in vain that he would pull the conventional long face or utter words of insincere sympathy. The candid tail would automatically wag, revealing the genuine sentiment. "Ex pede Herculem." This, almost the only recoverable example of her wit, seems to justify Dr. Garnett's encomium, which moreover some few of the passages given below will, to some extent, confirm.

It is necessary to assert positively, on the strength of convincing evidence, that Emily Patmore was,

during the greater part of her married life, in complete harmony with her husband, not merely on subordinate matters of opinion, but on the higher ground of religious thought. At first indeed they met on somewhat different planes. Patmore was, at the time of their marriage, an Anglican of the "higher" type, with at least some degree of Rome-ward tendency; while his wife, who had been brought up in Nonconformity, and whose great affection and reverence for her father exercised a strong influence over her long after his death, was a Protestant of a somewhat Puritanical sort. It was not however long before, by mutual accommodation, a common ground was reached, she accepting the position of a High Church Anglican, and he surrendering whatever he then had of leaning towards Rome; nor did she fail to enter into full sympathy with those spiritual ideas which, then as later, were of the essence of his faith.

After her death, among the records preserved of her, Patmore has transcribed in full the passages she had marked in her favourite books. Of these none seem to have been more carefully read than Thomas à Kempis's "Imitatio Christi" and the works of Jeremy Taylor; and in the former of these she has marked passages for approval or disapproval. The selection is precisely such as those who knew Patmore would have expected him to make for himself, and marks of interrogation are affixed to sentiments to which he would certainly have taken exception. It is the more transcendental thoughts of these writers which attracted her especial attention, while those from which she dissents are such as seem to disparage human affection and to treat it as incompatible with the full fruition of Divine Love. In connection with one passage thus marked Patmore writes in his diary, "Dear Love! she knew that, for those who love each other in Christ, this is quite untrue!"

The position intimated is in exact accordance with what was, then and later, Patmore's most deeply held conviction. To him, the highest exaltation of human affection was the best evidence and interpretation of the Divine, always enhancing and never compromising the closeness of Spiritual Communion; and in this, the very quintessence of his religious philosophy, she was in full accord with him. It is also evident that he was, during the years of his first marriage and for some time after his wife's death, satisfied with her arguments against the Roman Catholic claims. With his characteristic hatred of disputation, he left it to her to confute the proselytists who approached them, but gave his full assent to her conduct of the controversies which were forced on them, and to her conclusions. I am aware that this statement is more or less in contradiction to Patmore's own retrospective account of his position at this time; but these memoranda, made immediately after his wife's death, seem to me to be more convincing evidence than recollections written many years later. That Patmore had, from quite early years, felt somewhat drawn towards the Roman Church is certain: Dr. Garnett's evidence on this point is sufficient. Nevertheless I am convinced that in the retrospect taken after his change of creed the leaning towards Rome seemed to him to have been stronger and the variance from his wife's position greater than it actually was. But she is proved by these records to have been one to encourage rather than to check his more transcendental thought, and to give full sympathy to his more mystic apprehensions.

Patmore has recorded, both in his diaries and in his poems, his wife's tenderness and patience with their children. I remember too his once saying to me: "while all Christians could teach their children

that they had a Divine Father, at how great an advantage were those who could tell them of a Divine Mother." But her wisdom in control was no less conspicuous than her unselfish devotion. As an instance, he used to tell the following story. One of their sons was asking for some gift or indulgence which his mother did not think well to grant. The boy threatened her that, if she did not yield, he would dash his head against the fender. She quietly said, "Do so, my son." Whereupon the child burst into a passionate flood of tears, exclaiming, "But you love me so, mama!"

This anecdote accords with certain passages from her correspondence, which show that, however tender were her feelings, she was by no means given to that sentimental softness which her husband held in abhorrence.

III.

Before passing to the memoranda and correspondence, which give the best and most authentic picture of Emily Patmore's character, it may be well to record briefly the events of a life which, in its outward aspect, was simple and uneventful.

Emily Augusta Andrews, the fifth daughter and eighth child of the Reverend Edward Andrews and Eliza Honoria his wife, was born on Feb. 29, 1824. Her father was the Congregational minister of Beresford Chapel, Walworth, occupying a high position among his co-religionists, by whom he is said to have been regarded as "a sort of Pope." The most important member of the congregation to which he preached each Sunday "a somewhat eloquent, forcible, and ingenious sermon," was Mr. Ruskin senior, whose son has recorded [1] the aspect of the chapel as

[1] "Præterita," part i., chap. vii.

it presented itself to his youthful eyes. The building, Mr. Ruskin says, "was the Londonian chapel in its perfect type, definable as accurately as a Roman basilica—an oblong, flat-ceiled barn, lighted by windows with semi-circular heads, brick-arched, filled by small-paned glass held by iron bars, like fine threaded halves of cobwebs; galleries propped on iron pipes, up both sides; pews, well shut in, each of them, by partitions of plain deal, and neatly brass-latched deal doors, filling the barn floor, all but its lateral, straw-matted passages; pulpit, sublimely isolated, central from sides and clear of altar-rails at end, a stout, four-legged box of well-grained wainscot, high as the level of front galleries, and decorated with a cushion of crimson velvet, padded six inches thick, with gold tassels at the corners; which was a great resource to me when I was tired of the sermon, because I liked watching the rich colour of the folds and creases that came in it when the clergyman thumped it."

Dr. Andrews seems to have been kind and charitable to his flock and a careful and affectionate father to his children. His wife, the daughter of a minister, a gentle and delicate woman, died of consumption while her younger daughters were mere children. Her husband, who appears to have held more advanced views on the education of women than were usual at the period, taught his younger children; and Emily Augusta, who had a talent for languages, learnt Greek[1] and Latin, in which she acquired at least enough proficiency to enable her to help her sons in their preparation for school and for the Navy. At

[1] Dr. Andrews does not however seem to have had much knowledge of Greek. He was employed at a somewhat earlier date to teach Mr. Ruskin, who writes ("Præterita," part i., chap. iv.): "The Doctor, it afterwards turned out, knew little more of Greek than the letters and declensions of nouns; but he wrote the letters prettily, and had an accurate and sensitive ear for rhythm."

the age of fifteen she undertook the entire management of her father's house, doing also, with great sweetness and grace, all the duties which usually devolve on the wife of a conscientious minister.

Dr. Andrews died in 1841. Emily Augusta then went to live with an uncle, over whose house she presided until his death, after which she for a short time lived with her eldest sister, Mrs. Orme.

This life of somewhat premature responsibility tended to sever her from companions of her own age, and she used to tell her daughters that, living so much with older people, she had felt herself somewhat detached from the ordinary society of girlhood.

A lady who, though some years younger, was her frequent companion and lifelong friend, relates the following story of her own early youth. She and her sister, who were quite young children, were walking in Emily Andrews's charge in some lanes near London. They crossed a stile and found themselves in the presence of a savage bull, who at once made for them. Emily kept the animal at bay, by rapidly opening and shutting a lace parasol which she was carrying, till the children had recrossed the stile. As soon as they were safe, she leisurely retreated, still facing the bull and keeping him off, puzzled and confused by the dexterous use of her flimsy weapon of defence. The lady who tells the story adds that years afterwards in India, finding herself in a similar predicament, this time with a wild boar for adversary, her friend's tactics suddenly recurred to her memory, and she was able to save her life by the same means.[1]

Mrs. Orme, who had a large acquaintance among literary people, was intimate with the Laman

[1] A similar story is told in "Evenings at Home," the scene being India. If Emily Andrews's action was suggested by the story in this book, the idea had travelled back to the country of its origin.

Blanchards, who were also friends of Peter George Patmore. Emily Augusta had twice made long tours on the Continent with Mrs. Vigers, a sister of Laman Blanchard. It was probably through this family association that Coventry Patmore first became acquainted with his future wife. At any rate they met, fell in love with each other, and, in the course of a walk over the Hampstead fields, those now crossed by Redington Road (I remember Patmore pointing out to me the scene of the proposal), an offer of marriage was made, and accepted, on May 17th, 1847. Dr. Garnett tells me that, during the engagement, Patmore, desiring to discover how far his future wife's opinions were in accord with his own, lent her Emerson's Essays, asking her to note the passages of which she specially approved or disapproved; and found, to his intense satisfaction, that her comments were precisely what he himself would have made. Doubtless, as Dr. Garnett remarks, a lover would be apt to accept the views of the lady of his love. Still I think that in this case the endorsement implied real harmony of thought; for Patmore's opinions were always too definite and fixed to yield to any merely personal influence. They were married at St. John's Church, Hampstead, on September 11th, the same year, and spent their honeymoon at Hastings, a place specially dear to Patmore, as it was here that "in childhood, turning a dim street, he first beheld the ocean." Thenceforward Emily Augusta's history becomes for the most part merged in that of her husband. The records which remain serve mainly to amplify and confirm Patmore's testimony to her character.

It was her pride and pleasure to make the modest home attractive to her husband and his intimates, and she had an exceptional talent for making her household arrangements, on very slender means,

express comfort, refinement, and distinction. Patmore's friends, attracted not less by her grace and beauty than by his trenchant originality, loved to enjoy their hospitality; and their house became a meeting-place for much of the best intellect of the day. Tennyson, Ruskin, Carlyle, Browning, with many others of only less note, were frequent visitors;[1] and Emily Patmore, always gracious and hospitable, proved an excellent and appreciative listener to the masculine talk;—able too to take her own modest part in the more Olympian conversation by apt and witty remarks, while her deft fingers (she was a notable handler of the needle) were always occupied with embroidery or work of more practical utility. The charm of this centre of "plain living and high thinking" still survives in the memory of some few who were of the circle.

She possessed in an exceptional degree the faculty of training and managing her servants; and the power she showed was due not more largely to tact than to a good-will and sympathy which often led her to make considerable sacrifices for them. On two occasions she found that one of her maids was "keeping company," without immediate or definite

[1] A record of one such gathering survives in Patmore's own words. He used to tell the story more graphically than it is given here, but I print it as written by him in 1880 or 1881: "When we lived at 'the Grove, Highgate Rise' in a house which has since been burned down, we once had a small party, consisting of Ruskin, Tennyson and Browning only. Sydney Dobell came in late in the evening, and sat down by my wife, and began talking cleverly and very predominantly, laying down the law about many things. Hearing my wife address Mr. Ruskin by name, he asked in a whisper, 'Is that *the* Mr. Ruskin?' and became a little less authoritative. After making similar inquiries when he heard the other names, he became quite shy. There are however many passages in Dobell's poems which none present need have been ashamed to own, though most of his work is exasperating rubbish."

prospect of marriage. Considering the position unsatisfactory and of risk to the girl, and being a strong advocate of matrimony, she persuaded the lovers to marry forthwith, taking on herself all the trouble and expense of the wedding, and giving the breakfast at her own house.

To her children she was a most devoted mother, training them to be, like herself, "simple, truthful, and honourable." For the little daughter who was an invalid she had a special tenderness, and never failed, when she went to London, to bring her some little present to compensate for the loss of pleasures which her brothers and sisters were able to enjoy. The same daughter used, during her mother's last illness, to be taken to her bedside and taught her prayers. She remembers her mother saying to her, "I wish so much, dear, I had been alive in the time of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Then I would have taken you to Him to be cured, and I am sure He would have done it."

While devotedly nursing one of her children, she neglected a cold, which proved the beginning of the disease of which, some three years later, she died. Her illness caused a considerable change in her manner of life. Ordered by the doctors to try various health-resorts, she was frequently absent from her home and family; and it is to this that we owe the greater part of those beautiful letters which are the best revelation of her character. She was obliged to limit her domestic occupations; and, as she could never be happy without useful employment, she devoted her time to writing. Some children's stories of hers appeared in the juvenile periodicals of the day: one, it may be noted, was refused by all the publishers for a reason which is worth recording. This was a story called "The Runaway Boy." In it she showed so much com-

passion for children's troubles, such sympathy with their little naughtinesses, that it was held likely to encourage young readers to follow the example of the hero and run away too. It was under these circumstances also that she wrote "Nursery Rhymes, by Mrs. Motherly," "The Servants' Behaviour Book," "The History of Joseph and his Brethren," and "Nursery Stories."

During her long illness she was indefatigably cared for by her husband and her widowed sister, Georgiana Patmore. George Patmore, a younger brother of Coventry's, had, in 1854, married Georgiana Andrews, a younger and specially dear sister of Emily's, and had died, less than two years later, in the Island of Johanna, Mozambique Channel. She is described by one who knew her as a "sweet, sensible, and in every way most sterling woman, the Ruth of 'Tamerton Church Tower.'"[1]

The progress of the disease was rapid, and in 1860 her life was despaired of. The following letter was written when the anxiety for her was most acute:

"Finchley, Aug., 1860.

"DEAREST,

"I had a letter from Brett insisting on your seeing Dr. Kidd, and saying that, as money could be our only objection, he also insisted on paying a fee for him to go down to see you: accordingly he enclosed £20. Just think of the poor young painter's devotion to you. He will be my dearest friend to the end of my life. Of course I shall call on Dr. Kidd, and he will say what all the doctors say, that your cure must be wrought by nature. That will satisfy dear, faithful Brett, and I shall send him back his £20, which is most likely the greater part of all he had in the world. I am sure this ought to do you more good than the finest summer day. . . .

"Good-night. Pray for fine weather.

"COVENTRY."

[1] "Tamerton Church Tower," iv. 4.

She made all preparations for death, wrote down her wishes and instructions for the management of the children, made her will, and selected a spot in Hendon Churchyard for the grave in which two years later her body was laid. Though an unexpected rally postponed the inevitable ending, her husband underwent at this time all the bitterness of parting from her, and much of the material of "The Victories of Love" (the poem was mainly written before her death) is derived from the experiences of this earlier period.

She earnestly desired that he should marry again, and pressed this on him both by her will and by a long letter in which she explained her motives. Her will was found by Patmore in her desk (in 1860) when the immediate danger was passed. In it she says: "I leave my wedding-ring to your second wife with my love and blessing . . . also, I leave you my grateful acknowledgment of your goodness and love to me, my last prayer that God may bless and console you, my first, last, and only love. If in a year or two you are able to marry again, do so happily, feeling that if my spirit can watch you, it will love her who makes you happy, and not envy her the reward of a part of your love, the best years of which I have had."[1] Patmore records that, "scarcely comprehending the profundity of her self-abnegation in a matter in which he himself would have felt so differently," he remonstrated with her, and that in answer she referred him to the Scriptural permission, adding, "You cannot be faithful to God and unfaithful to me";[2] and in a letter, written a year later, she says that as regards the children, in taking a second wife,

"there will be no change from one rule to the other, so

[1] Cf. "Victories of Love," viii.
[2] Cf. "Tired Memory."

fatal to discipline and good feeling. You will be able to help and advise with a freedom you could never do to a stranger, and your dear wife, whom you will love as a friend, will soon learn that her best way of expressing her love for you will be to watch tenderly over your little lambs —and surely she must have a hard heart who will not love such pretty and amiable children as ours. . . . I have brought the children to look forward to your second marriage as a probable and desirable thing. They will not prejudice their new mother against them by giving her an ill reception. The two little ones will feel her to be their natural parent. May God bless you and keep you, and direct you in this and all your steps.

"Your fond and faithful Wife."

These years of reprieve, not unrelieved by gleams of delusive hope, were of inestimable value to both. The imminence of death had revealed, as nothing else could do, the depth and unselfishness of her love: the spiritual union had been strengthened and consolidated, and had acquired a sanctity which seldom comes till after the actual parting.[1] Her sufferings were to the last borne heroically, and the approach of death was faced without terror or even sorrow, save for those she was leaving. She died, July 5th, 1862, at a little house at North End, Hampstead, then known as Elm Cottage.[2]

[1] In 1861, when his wife seemed out of danger, Patmore records in his diary, among other "Memoranda for thanksgiving" (given above pp. 102-104), the following: "For her wonderful restoration to my prayers. For the great increase of our love through the many active proofs and exercises of love produced by her long danger. For the greater and more sensible tenderness which the precarious tenure of her life causes between us." To this note he adds after her death: "Thank God! I did not wait for death to show me the value of my Treasure."

[2] Patmore tried years afterwards to purchase this cottage, but was unable to do so. It was pulled down and rebuilt within a very short time of his own death. The new house bears the name "Elmwood."

COLLEGE

IV.

The following extracts are selected from the letters which Coventry Patmore wrote to Emily Augusta Andrews:

"I have been meditating a poem for you; but I am determined not to give you anything I write unless it is the best thing I have ever written. O, how much the best it ought to be, if it would do justice to its subject."

"I have not the least dread of making you vain. Women who are *merely* 'pretty' or 'handsome' always are more or less vain, but real beauty like yours is never vain; it is like genius, which is always humble, while 'talent' and 'cleverness' are always proud."

These are from their correspondence after marriage:

C. P. to E. A. P.

"Museum, Jan. 31, 1848.

"I have just now opened Scott's 'Life of Dryden' at the following passage: 'The wife of one who has to gain his livelihood by Poetry, or by any labour equally exhausting, must either have taste enough to relish her husband's performances or good-nature sufficient to pardon his infirmities.' How happy am I in possessing a wife who has *both*. C.P."

"The desire of mind to mind is never satiated but rather continually increased by inter-communion: when this desire of soul for soul is true, all other desire follows, and, as far as possible, keeps pace; and receives glory from its happy symbolization of the spiritual yearning: therefore we have found and shall find that each commemoration of our wedding-day is more than a renewal of that day; that the bride and bridegroom have not been lost in the husband and wife, but that the never-failing freshness and mystery of marriage is increased each year by the sum of all the love and joy which have arisen between us during its happy months.

"Nor does the sense of my total undesert take away anything from my happiness. It adds to it. I can compare the joy with which I remember that you honour me by your love to nothing except the joy with which I sometimes

feel myself to be the recipient of heavenly pardon and grace.

"The noblest of men whom we have the good fortune to love and to be loved by, says that there is merit between man and man, tho' not between man and God :[1] but there is no merit, I feel, between a man and a woman who perfectly love each other, and enjoy the heaven of marriage.

"Let us crown all our blessings by feeling grateful to God for them. What could we have prayed for that we have not? We are married, and love completely : we have a sweet little outward symbol of our union : St. Paul's[2] prayer that we should have neither riches nor poverty has been ours, and it has been granted : that we may not be narrow and selfish in our bliss, a friend[3] has been given us, whom we have every reason to think echoes our devotion to him not faintly ; so that our circle of love is complete ; and if, as we think, it is deficient in breadth, it certainly makes up in fervour and solid results of good for any such deficiency. Around this circle goes a larger one of good acquaintances, which, if we did not know what true friendship is, we should call good friends. Lastly, all these blessings are hallowed, and our bliss made perfect, by knowing that we have accepted the salvation of God in Christ, and that we are resolved to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and that it is a good thing for us to be in the power of the Lord. C. P."

The reader who knows Plato will scarcely fail to detect the close resemblance which the earlier part of this letter bears to the philosopher's thought. In copying it into the volume which he calls "Liber Amoris" (in 1863), Patmore eliminated all the allusions to Tennyson.

E. A. P. to C. P., 1849.

"Mrs. V. seemed so much astonished at two or three kind stories I told of you . . . that I could not help asking

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[1] See prologue to "In Memoriam."

[2] It should be "the words of Azur the son of Jakeh."—Proverbs, xxx. 8.

[3] A. Tennyson.

her what had given her such an opposite impression of you. After much persuasion she confessed that it was your 'haughty manner,' and my appearance of instant submission to your slightest wish, which she thought must come from fear."

"From me (C. P.) while staying at Coniston with Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson, in 1850."

"Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson will stand for Baby.[1] . . . T. seems to have talked so much to his wife about you that she already knows you and counts on you for a friend. . . . T. and I were taking a long walk on Friday, and had been talking for hours about other matters, when suddenly he said, 'What do you think of her?' 'Who?' I said. 'Her, my wife.' . . . 'Yes,' he said, 'she is quite a perfect woman. She is a good deal like your wife.'"

E. A. P. to C. P., 1850.

"I can quite reconcile myself to this solitude for the sake of Baby's health and the Poem. Remember all these advantages, Dear, and think how wrong it would be to let such an opportunity pass by."

"I have been trying to get some 'Ideas' for you,[2] but have only found one, and that a bad one I fear, as the fruit of a morning's thought."

"It requires separation to keep up the mere romance of love. . . . I daresay we shall find through our whole lives that we shall fancy the romance is gone whenever we have been together for twelve months; whereas a week's parting will bring it back directly, however old we may be. I can quite . . . well imagine you kissing a long grey hair when . . . (I) was away nursing a grandchild. . . . If only we can be good Christians we must go on loving each other more and more."

C. P. to E. A. P., 1850.

"Oh! how I long for Monday afternoon, when I shall come *home*, and find the house with the spirit in it that

[1] Tennyson Patmore, the second son.
[2] For "The Angel."

makes it home. . . . In all you do you are like an angel in Heaven, where, as Dante says, 'everything is done zealously and well.'"

"'Love and Money'[1] is now the order of the day with us. It reads capitally. Such real, unaffected writing is not common with the best modern writers. You ought really to do something. We might then go down to posterity as a 'double star;' whereas now all your light will be swallowed up in mine. 'The Happy Wedding'[2] will really be far more yours than mine, but that will never be known unless you let the world see what you can do if you like."

"The pleasure which the presence of the great sea always gives me was strangely modified and made into something much like melancholy by the recollection that you were not there."

"The great magnolia[3] at the top of High Street, which was in flower when you were here, is without blossoms now, and really to my heart it seems as if it were because you are not here. I could kiss the steps of the shop where I paid for your sand-shoes[4] and felt so like a husband for the first time. The people of the house here seem like my dear friends because they have seen and spoken to you."

E. A. P. to C. P., 1850.

"Sometimes I almost wish that something would interfere with our letting the house after all. . . . Nothing but the recollection of your Poem makes me reasonable again. Indeed . . . you ought to work very hard when your . . . wife makes such a great sacrifice for the sake of enabling you to do it. You have almost reason to be jealous of the Poem when you find I will give you up for it."

C. P. to E. A. P., 1855.

"I am delighted at your prudence and affection in offering to do, during this winter at least, with only one servant.

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[1] "The title of a tale I persuaded her to write."—Note by C. P.

[2] The first idea of a title for "The Angel in the House."

[3] This magnolia covers the whole front of the house at Hastings where Patmore lived from 1875 to 1891.

[4] See "The Angel in the House," xii. 1.

We shall have all the more pleasure in putting up with the little inconveniences of this plan because we shall know that we are not *compelled* to adopt it."

"I tremble in mind when I think of the fortune which I enjoy. . . . The most noble and lovely of women for my wife: three of the prettiest children ever seen: health made delightful by preceding years of languor, and, hard at hand, worldly honour and prosperity; and, almost above all, the assured feeling of being called to do a work which, to him who can do it, must necessarily be the greatest of delights as well as the greatest of duties."

"From her at Brighton to me, 1856."

"I hope this week will do as much as last week did for the Poem. Each step, now, seems to do so much more than the same degree of advance did in the beginning. When I allow myself to think about the joy of its being finished and published, I feel a whirl of joy, but somehow I have a superstition against indulging in joyful anticipations of any kind. The present is, upon the whole, so happy that it seems wrong to dwell with longing upon anything better."

"I have just found out what I feel like when you are away; like a curious shell-fish we found, with claws like a lobster, but in a shell like a snail's. When we kept it, it became very uneasy, and, at last, in desperation, crawled quite out of its shell. Can you fancy how naked, cold, homeless, and imperfect it must have felt, and how it must have longed for the warm, safe shell again? This is exactly how I feel. I have crawled out of my shell and am longing with all my might to be safe in it again. This is exactly how I always know I shall feel, to my life's end, if you die first. I cannot tell you how exactly it expresses the feeling I have when you are away—the weak, unsafe, unconcentrated feeling. It is a very ugly simile (and would be more so if you had seen the hideous, unnatural looking fish), but it is so apt that I cannot help telling it to you."

"From me at Brighton to Her, 1856."

"Sometimes . . . I think that there is only one thing which could make me love you *much* more than I do, and that would be the smallpox. You would then depend for

entire admiration a little on my kindness, whereas now your claims are absolute. . . . 'On a bientôt pris sa suffisance d'une belle femme, on ne lasse point d'une bonne,' said a Frenchman who deserved an English wife, and probably had one."

"From me to Her at Hastings, March, '57."

"All that I have written in the 'Angel' about love is much below the intensity and delicacy of the plain reality."

"From her letters . . . at Margate, very ill, supposed to be dying, 1860."

"Tenny[1] is just come. We have had a little religious talk—only three minutes. I told him how near God seems to me in the quiet nights, and I almost hear Him say He will take care of me and help me in pain and sickness, and that all who have loved God long felt this joy."

"I had a very happy and delightfully warm—not hot—hour-and-a-half on the jetty where the waves dash. I had fruit, thinking I should see R——'s children. As they did not come, I found plenty of little friends. I do so enjoy it. I give a smile (never to a child with a lady, though sometimes, but not often, to nice-looking children), the smile is returned: fruit is displayed, sweeter smiles ensue: the fruit is stretched out, and the pretty creatures come and take it, always looking for more, sometimes boldly, sometimes shyly. A poor family of mother, baby, and six children were just below me, on the sands, and it was so delightful throwing down and seeing all the six faces look up and nod and smile at once; I should say seven, for the mother joined in just like the babies, and we kissed hands at parting."

From C. P. to E. A. P., 1860.

"I have been thinking to-day upon all your patient, persistent goodness, your absolutely flawless life, and all your amiable and innocent graces."

"How well we can see . . . that God is inexpressibly tender, as well as powerful in what He does for us. Many

[1] Tennyson Patmore, their second son.

threats come before the stroke falls—as if He would have us convinced that, if it does fall, there is no other way. Do not forget to pray for me that there may be another way, and that His Grace and the past and present fear may be enough."

This is as much of the correspondence as I venture to give. For the rest, the reader may accept my assertion that scarcely ever can letters more ardent in passionate devotion, expressed with such perfect candour, delicacy, and charm, have passed between husband and wife. They cover the whole period of their engagement and marriage, presenting a record of ever-increasing tenderness, while her letters abound in revelations of feminine feeling from which the poem ("The Angel") has obviously profited, and to the best portions of which they are inferior only in absence of poetic form.

V.

The following are extracts from Coventry Patmore's diary, written partly before, partly after, his wife's death.

"Her strange beauty and extreme innocence of countenance and manner."

"At Mr. P.'s party Alfred Tennyson scarcely spoke to any one but her, to the apparent envy and surprise of certain great ladies, who evidently thought so splendid a beauty with so milkmaid-like an absence of pretension was contrary to the usages."

This was at Bryan Waller Procter's. We may wonder how Patmore detected such sentiments on the part of the "great ladies," who as a rule are capable of concealing "envy" even when they feel it: his pride in his wife and optimism about his personal concerns would be likely to produce the impression.

The diary proceeds as follows:

"Her unalterable mildness and goodness under certain extreme provocations."

"The perfect correspondence of her just and sweet nature to her beauty of countenance, which expressed an amount of softness and good-will that could not have been expressed without her noble severity of feature."

"Her beauty of person and grace of manner, always most affecting to the most highly and purely cultured persons."

"The matchless goodness and good sense, of which her personal beauty seemed to be the natural blossom."

"The conversations with Mr. Aubrey De Vere and Dr. Manning on the Roman Catholic religion, in which she answered all their most subtle arguments, which were wholly beyond my power to see through, so as to set my mind at rest on this point."

"Emily read De Vere's Essays on the R. C. R., and, though shaken at first, answered everything in them to her own satisfaction, which certainly would have been to mine, but she was too weak to talk much and explain her solutions of his difficulties. I always found her right when she had strength to show me her reasons, and her right was of a high, simple, and holy kind, which seemed to be on a higher level than the arguments by which Dr. Manning and De Vere endeavoured to bring us to the R. C. R."

"Her kind and wise mind: her wifely love, which acutely felt every variation of my irregular moods, yet never showed any impatience: her honest heart, which instantly discerned the right in every moral question: her lofty simplicity, which made ordinary and mixed society a false and embarrassing position to her."

"Her great desire and successful endeavour to be useful up to the last—children's dresses made, my things mended, prudent measures taken for the future."

Patmore preserved a most pathetic memorial of her careful forethought for her children. During her last illness she kept by her a little memorandum book in which she jotted down, as they occurred to

her, instructions for the management of the children after her death, as to dress and other matters, giving explanatory sketches.

"Her sweet, natural, and unartistic affection for flowers and everything beautiful."

The derivatives of "artist" are used by Patmore, here and elsewhere, in a special sense, implying a heartless and merely æsthetic appreciation.[1]

"The harmony of her conscience and feeling."

"Gem-like neatness and order of her house."

"Extraordinary power of turning a rough girl into a polished servant in the course of a few months."

"Her greatly effectual charities on very small means."

"The exquisite womanly talent shown in her writings for children and servants."

"The bountiful affection of her first welcome to my mother, and the loyalty which always answered by warm love to any merely formal claim for love."

This seems to confirm the impression, elsewhere indicated, that the mother's manner was marked by a certain cold stateliness. (Cf. p. 5).

"Her infallible judgment in morals and in the higher kinds of taste, poetry, etc."

"Her heroic self-devotion to the children, through which she died before her time."

"Without seeing her face, anyone could see her goodness and innocence by her shape and carriage."

"The quite incomparable sweetness of her voice, which, in common talk, was sweeter than any song. It was the very tone of innocence and love."

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[1] Cf. a letter of his written at Coniston about William Allingham's poetry, p. 196.

"Her beauty of face and of figure was extraordinary; yet they attracted less attention than they otherwise would have done, because the impression the sight of her gave was not 'How beautiful!' but 'How kind!'"

Compare the following passage from "Amelia":

"And yet to look on her moved less the mind
To say 'How beauteous!' than 'How good and kind!'"

"Amelia," Patmore's favourite of all his poems, though written nearly fifteen years after his wife Emily's death,[1] contains other unmistakable allusions to her, both in the title and eminently in the following lines:

"With great kind eyes, in whose brown shade
Bright Venus and her Baby played."

"The pleasure she took in the progress of 'The Angel,' and how the assurance of its importance and ultimate success made her joyfully consent to a life of voluntary poverty for years, involving distinctly twice letting our house, and going into very poor but heavenly happy lodgings."

"Her innocent heart, which until late in her last illness made the dawn of every new day a delight, as with a child."

"Born February 29th, in token of her singularity and rareness, as well as of her transparent candour. . . ."

"August 3rd, 1862.[2] This morning (Sunday), as I was walking round the garden with Emily and talking about Her, Emily suddenly burst into tears and hid her head against me, holding her arm and hand, which were away from me, straight out, and saying, 'Mama has got hold of my hand.' I said, 'Are you frightened?' She answered 'No, but somehow it makes me cry.' We walked on for some minutes silent, Emily still crying and holding out her left

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[1] In a letter to Mr. Buxton Forman, Patmore says: "To the best of my recollection 'Amelia' was written very early in the year 1878."

[2] A month after his wife's death. "Emily" is, of course, the eldest daughter.

arm and hand as if it was in another's grasp. I said, 'Is Mama still with you?' She answered, 'Yes. She is pointing up and saying that I must not be unhappy, as I shall be up there with her if I am good.' Afterwards Emily told me that she asked her Mama why she did not go and speak to me, and she said, 'She was not allowed yet, because I was stronger and did not require it, but that she would come to me by-and-bye in dreams.'"

"Emily tells me to-day (August 4th), in answer to my questions, that her Mama was dressed in white: that she seemed taller than before, and that she only saw the side of her face because it was turned upwards all the time. Emily is just nine years old, and is singularly careful of truth. Bertha (six-and-a-half years old) dreamt she saw her mother carried up dead, and beautifully dressed, on a blue and silver bier between two angels. . . . And, while she was away at Mrs. Jackson's, at the time her mother was just dead, though she did not know this, she had nightly other dreams which, for her age, seem supernatural, and to have been actually visitations.

"'You have seen and therefore you believe: Blessed are those who have not seen and who yet believe.'"

"'The fair at death are always fair.' (Barnes.)"

Patmore was never, while I knew him, either specially credulous of spiritual appearances or wont to talk about them, though I am sure that he would not have disbelieved in them on *a priori* grounds. This record was undoubtedly written down at the time, and expressed a genuine conviction. Patmore often stated his belief that dreams might be of the deepest spiritual import.

I proceed with extracts from the diary:

"Her sweet, innocent tears at some of my over-righteous resolutions."

"If you remember the superiority of her simple, natural judgment over that of the cleverest and best-read men, you will have no fear of getting beyond her in any course of culture."

The preceding passage may be compared with "In Memoriam," xl. and xli., where however obstacles to reunion are considered on a somewhat different line of thought.

"Remember, above all, the 5,410 days she was my wife, and on each one of which, though nothing happened to be remembered, she did her duty to me, her children, her neighbours, and to God, with a lovely, unnoticeable evenness and completeness."

"Aug. 23rd, 1862. Last night I dreamt that she was dying: awoke with unspeakable relief to find that it was a dream; but, a moment after, to remember she was dead."

The above is obviously the germ of the Ode "The Azalea."

"Her *extreme* economy in her own personal expenses, and her encouragement of, and invitation to, extravagance in mine."

"Her foresight of probable fatal results of over-work, and deliberate conclusion that it was right to go on. (I had not then learned how well she weighed her words.)"

"When in danger from sloth, remember how she did all things zealously and well under whatever temptation to do otherwise."

The following entry associates his wife with the idea which is the keynote of his subsequent writings:

"The relation of the soul to Christ *as his betrothed wife* is the key to the feeling with which prayer and love and honour should be offered to Him. In this relation is a mine of undiscovered joy and power. *She* showed me what that relationship involves of heavenly submission and spotless, passionate loyalty."

There are other entries in the same diary which distinctly foreshadow certain Odes, besides those specially mentioned above. These passages however are of too pathetic or of too intimate a character

to be transcribed here. Thoughts and feelings may be such as can rightly be presented in verse alone, and Patmore seems to me, in some at least of his Odes, to have reached the extreme limit in the expression of feelings which, divested of poetic form, are almost intolerable in their poignancy.

The following memorandum was made by Patmore one year after his wife's death :

"To these reasons for gratitude add : that, if the life of love is service, I am now called upon to do more for her than ever, by being both Mother and Father to her six little ones, my love and patience towards whom have been immeasurably increased since her departure."

At about the same time he wrote the following letter :

"Hastings,
"June 13, '63.

"MY DEAR GARNETT,

"I suppose your honeymoon has commenced. At least it is about to commence. You did not tell me the day. I too am enjoying a honeymoon of memory and hope which it is my prayer that sixteen years' probation may entitle you also to enjoy—without the drawback I suffer. I am in the same house and in the same rooms to which I brought my bride in 1847, and for your comfort as a true-hearted young bridegroom I can without a shadow of exaggeration say that my first nuptial joy was a poor thing compared with the infinite satisfaction I can now feel in the assurance which time has brought, that my relation to Her is as eternal as it is happy.

"With best wishes,
"Ever truly yours,
"COVENTRY PATMORE."

To the very end of his life, his change of creed notwithstanding, Patmore regarded his wife Emily as a saint. He kept the anniversary of her death as a day of seclusion, self-examination, and prayer. When in the early days of their conversion one of the

children hesitated over prayers to Our Lady, he said, "Pray to your mother, if you like that better." He was always, no doubt mainly on her account, inexpressibly indignant at any bigoted limitation of future happiness to those of his new Communion. He too used often to tell his friends, with evident pride, that during her long illness, in spite of slender means, his wife had been in all substantial respects "as much cared for as any Duchess" could have been.

VI.

Emily Augusta Patmore left many little poems in manuscript, of which I give the following specimen:

"Rich and Poor.

"Cold the rain is, cold the air,
Long and weary is the way:
Hard I work for scanty fare,
Coming, going every day;
Yet the very load I bear
Turns my working into play.

"Johnny, what I feel for thee
Miser never felt for gold.
Put thy face up close to me,
Let me keep thee from the cold.
Sweet, I love thee tenderly:
O, how much a heart can hold!

"Who shall say that I am poor?
Here I hold a priceless gem,
Mine, and yet in value more
Than a monarch's diadem.
If crowns were offered by the score
In change for thee, I'd laugh at them.

"I have seen a queen arrayed
All in purple and in gold:

Lords at every word she said
Bent their necks so proud and bold;
Yet I knew a grave was made
Where her little ones lay cold.

"Sure was I that queen would give
All her palace could contain
Might those pretty babies breathe,
Could she see them smile again.
Ah, my Johnny, while you live,
I am richer of the twain.

"Let the miser keep his money,
Give the queen what wealth can buy,
Days as sweet and smooth as honey,
Years of pomp and luxury.
While I keep my little Johnny,
Who so rich and proud as I?"

The following are Browning's verses alluded to in the note to p. 118:

"WRITTEN ON EMILY IN HER ALBUM, FROM WHICH IT IS TORN."

"If one could have that little head of hers
Painted upon a background of pale gold
Such as the Tuscan's early art prefers!
No shade encroaching on the matchless mould
Of those two lips, that should be opening soft
In the pure profile—not as when she laughs,
For that spoils all—but rather as aloft
Some hyacinth she loves so leaned its staff's
Burthen of honey-coloured studs to kiss
Or capture 'twixt the lips, apart for this.
Then her lithe neck, three fingers might surround,
How it should waver on the pale gold ground
Up to the fruit-shaped perfect chin it lifts!

"I know Correggio loves to mass in rifts
Of Heaven his angel-faces, orb on orb

Breaking its outline burning shades absorb;
But these are only mustered, I should think,
Waiting to see some wonder momently
Grow out, stand full, fade off against the sky
(That's the pale ground you see the sweet face by),
All Heaven meanwhile condensed into one eye,
Which fears to lose a wonder should it wink.

"ROBERT BROWNING.

"London, Oct. 11, '52."

These verses, slightly altered, appeared twelve years later in "Dramatis Personæ" as "A Face."

Emily Honoria Patmore, the eldest daughter, in her sixteenth year, wrote the following sketch of her mother for the present Mrs. Patmore.

"E. P.
"Born 1824. Died 1862.
"Aged 38.

"She was the daughter of a clergyman named Andrews. She had two or three brothers and several sisters. When a baby (she told me) they used to remark her large eyes, and sing to her, 'No mouth, no nose, no hands, no ears, all eyes': you know how people clap their hands at babies at endings like 'all eyes.' She was very fond of her youngest sister, Georgie, but one of her elder sisters used to tyrannize over her. When a girl, I suppose about 15 or 14, she went to live with an uncle. Her aunt was unkind to her (I think), and she told me she was always too young for older people's enjoyments, and too old for those of the children. I forgot to say that her mother died of consumption. She once told me, as a great sin, that this mother was ill and had some white jelly to eat, of which *she* actually took a little: soon after her mother asked her to bring the plate, saying, 'I have some nice jelly of which I will give you some.' 'Just think,' said she to me, 'how sorry I was as I handed down the plate.' Everyone, when she was a child, remarked her gentleness. At my age, or very little older, she acted as housekeeper, and saw after everything in the house. I do not know her age at her marriage: I think 22. Papa and she were so happy for some time that it could not last long, and when I was very little the consumption

began. I think she had it for 5 years before she died. I remember very little of Kentish-town, where I first remember living. We went to Finchley. Here everything seemed perfect at first. Here I remember the only words that struck me as impatient that she ever spoke. And that was only when I said, very rudely, that 'I was sure she could not hook her own frock.' I forget the exact words of her answer, something like 'Of course I can.' She went to Tunbridge Wells or Margate for her health. When she was going, I cried, and, when she kissed my face, said, 'But the kisses will be washed off when I wash my face.' So she put them inside my mouth. At Finchley I was very naughty. Once Papa called me into a room, and there she was sitting and crying: he said, 'Take your handkerchief away, dear, and let Emily see you are crying.' So I saw she was crying because I was so naughty. At last she was so ill that she went away, and I and Bertha went to school. G. and H. were out at nurse. T. and M. at schools.[1] After one quarter we came away and lived, in London in winter; at Elm Cottage, Hampstead, in summer. Now B. and I were always with Papa and her: just imagine! What I should think of it now! I must pass over some time. We, as I said, went to Hampstead in the summer. She grew worse, and after my ninth birthday, 2nd of June, she was very ill. One evening I had said good-night and came back to fetch a book. She was sitting in that folding cane arm-chair which is in the entrance, with one hand on its arm, and her head leaned back, as if very weak. I sat up in bed to read my book, and came to the mother in it dying. It seemed to strike me very much: soon after, I heard all the bells in the house ringing, everyone running about, Papa calling my brother, and Mama calling for 'the children.' I was very much frightened, but stayed in bed. The next day we heard that she was very ill: we went to Mrs. Jackson's for a week (B. and I): when we came back, the funeral was over. Papa came for us in a cab. I asked how she was, and he said, 'Better than she has ever been' (I was so glad for a moment), but he added, 'for she is in heaven.' I was very—I don't know what; I felt very good, but lonely, I leaned my head on Papa, but did not cry.

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[1] G. is Gertrude, H., Henry, T., Tennyson, M., Milnes.

But I will tell you all I know of her death. She was insensible for three days, and died on Saturday at midnight, like our Lord being three days in the grave and rising at that time. The insensibility began at the time He was buried. Bertha, at Mrs. Jackson's, and only knowing she was ill, dreamt that she was suddenly quite well, which must mean that she went straight to Heaven. Just before her death, we used to feed the sparrows a great deal, and at last they used to eat off her very pillows. She was rather tall, not stout, but not sylph-like:

> How changed, in shape no slender Grace,
> But Venus, milder than the dove:

had a perpetual smile, 'like moonbeams on a wavering mere,' and yet was always grave. Her eyes were 'clear lakes of true hazel colour.' Very indulgent to us, yet very particular, especially about obedience and reverence to holy things. I remember once B. and I were always singing and saying a hymn, 'Jesus tender,' it began, and she asked us to call it some other name. I am sure she loved our Lord as much as any one does, and others more than most people, and 'Love is the fulfilment of the law.' Her manners were calm and gentle. She was very clever, and knew Latin and, I think, Greek; but everyone forgot this in her womanly character. She was a perfect workwoman: I remember her making shirts for Papa in the bed in which she died. Papa paints her character: I need not try. But do not imagine that she is the very same as H. C.[1] Her family were not the same, and the circumstances of the whole book. I hope you will not be disappointed and only care for imaginary H. C. Her grave is in Hendon (near Finchley) Cemetery. If you ever go there, look for it: it is a cross like that on the cover of this book, with E. P. and the date of her death, a lily, a crown with a star on each point, and 'Come, Lord Jesus.'[2] The letters are in colours, the lily and crown in pure white. She always tried to make me very honourable and truthful, very fond of my country (I have been ever since), and very fond of the

[1] Honoria Churchill, the heroine of "The Angel."

[2] This monument was replaced many years later (about 1882) by another bearing the inscription "Emily, wife of Coventry Patmore" (see illustration).

poor. I am sure her prayers have obtained for us to come into the Church, and have had a great influence on my life: if you knew all, you would agree with me. She wrote in a letter, a short time before her death: 'May my death be life to others.' She died on the 5th July. I always consider 'All Saints' as her feast, as it is meant for unknown saints. I will draw her figure as well as I can remember it.[1] I daresay that is not at all like it. The reason why I think crinolines pretty is that she wore them or something stiff.

"Her favourite flowers were Canterbury bells, and colour violet. I cannot tell you what I did not ask Papa for, but I can that I am *sure* she is safe, if not in Heaven, as I *think*. I will leave the rest for things I do not remember now. Bertha had several beautiful dreams about her at the time of her death. One is full of symbols. You see B. was very young, and would never have dreamt them naturally. That of which I spoke is as follows:

"'Angels brought Mama in on a bier covered with blue velvet. The angels were dressed in white. . . . Mama in white also. . . .

"The blue velvet, perhaps, means the rest of eternity. Eternity always seems blue to me. The white, of course, purity.

It may be noted that Emily makes no mention of her mother's appearance to her recorded by her father, though she speaks of her sister's dreams. Mrs. Patmore, who knew Emily with special intimacy, feels sure that she would have considered the vision too sacred a memory to mention even to her.

VII.

The following letters written by Emily Patmore illustrate various points in her character.

"Thursday, 24. (1853?)

. . . "Mrs. —— called here to ask Coventry to sign a paper, stating that Mr. —— was honest, industrious and *sober!* She says he has become a teetotaller, and had at that time

[1] A sketch is given in MS.

not tasted liquor for 6 weeks. Coventry said he could not possibly say he *knew* him to be sober, and that a wife's authority, supposing a 6 weeks' reformation to be a proof of a real alteration, was not sufficient to enable him to pledge his word for the said reform. . . .

"She would not at all see this, and seemed quite unable to understand a conscientious scruple in such a matter, and though very civil, went away evidently deeply offended. We have heard nothing of her since. I shall call and find out if she is going. . . . I dare say she has found some good-natured, easy-conscienced person who has put his name to the paper, so putting Government to the expense of sending out a drunkard, when hundreds of honest, starving men are longing to go. . . .

"Coventry's new book of poetry[1] is just come out. . . . There is a long poem called 'Honoria' addressed to me. There is also a lady named 'Blanche' who is taken from R—, not in mind but in person merely. It is exactly like her. . . .

"8 Grove,
"Kentish Town."

"3, Mount Vernon, Hampstead,
"Jany. 5, 1855.

"DEAR MR. ALLINGHAM,

"I forgot, when I wrote to you last, to remark upon one of your pencil criticisms on Coventry's poems.[2] You say, apropos of one of the 'sentences,' 'Beauty is flesh and blood, sir,' etc.—'If I were a bishop, I would call you to account, for thus ranking natural with revealed religion,' or some such words.

"This does not mean that one may read *as much* in the 'flesh and blood' as in the 'rags and printer's ink,' but simply to compare the mode of profiting by the one, to the mode of profiting by the other.

"The poet admires not the flesh and blood, but the natural religion readable therein. So he values not the rags and ink, but the revelation made through their medium.

"It is a mere comparison of small with great, no more intended to give equal value to things compared than a

[1] "Tamerton Church Tower."
[2] "The Betrothal" was published in 1854.

thousand other poetical comparisons—of ladies' cheeks to roses, snow to purity, smiles to sunshine, etc., etc. Do you not allow this to be the effect of it? At any rate it was so intended.

"I have read the remainder of your review in 'The Critic' with great pleasure, excepting one paragraph, that which relates to Mr. Patmore Senr. I think you are unnecessarily severe upon him: would it not have been sufficient to point out the mistake without giving an implied censure to the spirit of his writings?

"I have saved a copy of the review for Coventry to read at the expiration of his vow[1] (in April), but have cut out from it a few lines of this paragraph, so that he will never see what has appeared to me severe upon his father, nor will he notice the join in the paper, as the whole review is in pieces sewn together.

"Yours most sincerely,
"EMILY A. PATMORE."

"8 Grove, Kentish Town, 1856.

"DEAR MR. ALLINGHAM,

"I have had staying with me a young lady who has read and wept over your 'Music-Master' many times, and who copied out the 'Nursery song,' 'Evey,' 'The Dream,' and many of your small poems, and borrowed the volume many times to read it to other friends whom she visited during her stay here. I have a great wish to give her a copy to keep, but find, whenever I seriously intend to do so, other calls of money start up, and nip my intention in the bud. I write therefore to ask you—if you have the command of your own books—whether you will enable me to be generous at your expense, and send me permission to get a copy to present to your fair admirer, to whom I will, if possible, introduce you one day, in return.

"Coventry . . . is now recruiting from temporary weakness at Brighton. I hope the reaction will show itself in the form of the three idylls wanted to complete 'The Espousals.' Do you know that 'The Betrothal' has been printed in America? Miss Howell sends me a whole batch of review praise, from American papers.

"Mr. Woolner has just completed a wonderfully good

[1] The vow, no doubt, was to read no notices of his poem.

bust of Tennyson, rather over life size. It will appear in marble, next year, at the Royal Academy. I never saw a bust which seems to me so good. His statuette of 'Love,' in marble, is to be exhibited this year. Of course you know of Holman Hunt's return. Millais has been in town, but we did not see him: he has several pictures for the Academy.

"I suppose you know I have a fourth child and second daughter. She is twelve weeks old, her name is Bertha Georgiana. Gurney is well, but like yourself still a miserable bachelor. I believe both the Rossettis are engaged, but, as I did not hear it from themselves and the report may be false, I will not mention the names of the ladies whom my informant assigned to each.

"Tennyson is far advanced in another volume,—'King Arthur,' I believe—which he has wisely resolved on doing in a series of idylls, like the 'Morte d'Arthur' of his printed volume. I forget who told me this, and not certain of its accuracy, but some one must have said it, or it would not have entered my head. . . .

"Yours very sincerely,
"E. A. PATMORE."

"Farringford,
"Freshwater.

"Mrs. Tennyson's two boys are sweet children, one four and a half, the other two years younger, Hallam and Lionel. Mr. Tennyson has read me two magnificent new poems on subjects from the times of Prince Arthur. They are really magnificent. I believe they will be out in the spring.

"Sir John and Lady Simeon are very amiable and clever people, who are great admirers of Coventry's 'Angel in the House.' The invitation is of long standing, and as they have a lovely house and grounds, etc., I look forward to the visit with great pleasure. . . .

"Wednesday, '57."

To Miss Eliza Robinson.

"Highwood Cottage,
"Thurs. Ap. 9, 1858.

". . . The news of Philip is highly gratifying, far more so than the news of gold found and manners—and what generally goes with manners in such a case, self-respect

and even principles—lost. Coarse manners are no discredit to one born among them ; but one born and bred in refinement can never lose it without internal damage equal to external. Manners and mind, in such a case, generally keep pace ; and in a case like Philip's, the retention of gentle manners proves much good feeling and principle. I am delighted to know what must please you so much. . . ."

To Mrs. Jackson. [1862].

" He has asked me to explain to you more fully about the difficulty of leaving Milnes. We are extremely anxious that he should pass in March. We shall have no peace of mind till the point is settled, and all Coventry's work too will stand still. You will see then how desirable it is to save three months of this anxiety and toil—besides, if Milnes fails in March there will be a second expensive and time-consuming journey to Portsmouth—besides other additional expenses and troubles that I need not describe. As there are only about twenty-eight working days before the March examination, and Coventry teaches Milnes three hours every evening, you will see that an evening missed would be a serious loss ; indeed Coventry looks upon it as a distinct duty to give himself entirely to this work for the next month. Had it not been for this Coventry would have been so glad to meet Mr. and Mrs. Vaughan.[1] I hope you will give him the opportunity another time.

" I have had it much on my mind to make you recall your expressions of displeasure about Lady Monteagle's objections to ' The Garland.' I had particularly asked her to tell me any blame she should hear, as it is so difficult to know what is really said of one's husband's work. She most kindly made notes of all, whether or not she sympathized with the objection. I believe Mrs. H. Taylor agreed to all, but Lady Monteagle did not. She has been so kind to me that (like Frederick Graham) I must say

> ' —do not write her name
> With the least word or hint of blame.' [2]

---

[1] Mr. Vaughan is Henry Halford Vaughan, sometime Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. He had married Mrs. Jackson's eldest daughter. There are other allusions to him in these volumes.

[2] " Victories of Love," VII.

I can only describe her kindness by comparing it to yours: yet you know every real feeling shows itself in an original form; and each of you are kind in your own way.

"You know I am not so well as I was. Dr. Kidd promises to make me right again, but I am a little depressed at finding an increase of those symptoms which were so nearly fatal to me once. Do not think me ungrateful, after having had so many blessings, to complain at the first suspicion of evil; if I were *certain that real illness* was coming I believe I could cheerfully submit, but the uncertainty is depressing: there are so many that I love, and for whom, even now, I can do much. I did not mean to say all this, but in writing to you, my dear friend, I cannot help speaking of what is in my heart."

To Miss Eliza Robinson.

"14, Percy St.,
"March 7, '62.

". . . Mr. Patmore is now at Portsmouth with Milnes, who is undergoing his examination for the Navy. They will stay till next Wednesday, knowing nothing whatever of the result till that day. You may imagine my anxiety; for, though he has another chance in June, it is a question of some import to us, whether there is to be another Portsmouth journey, with its travelling and hotel expenses, and in the meantime three months more of cramming tutors' pockets that they may cram Milly's head: besides, worst of all, it is three months more of anxiety and suspense. I suppose in Wednesday's or Thursday's 'Times' the names of those who passed will be announced.

. . . . . .

I am very poorly to-day. . . . I am suffering from several weakening attacks incident to my complaint. I daresay dear little Sarah went through all these things. I often think of her. Her sweet face is one I long to recognize in heaven. Georgiana is coming to-morrow to spend the day with me. We are the same inseparables as ever. Love to your dear Mama and all.

"Your aff. friend,
"EMILY PATMORE."

MONUMENT IN HENDON CHURCHYARD.

CHAPTER XI

"THE ANGEL IN THE HOUSE"

THE preceding chapter will have shown the reader in what manner and to what extent Patmore had been aided by his marriage with Emily Augusta Andrews in gaining insight into the subject of the poem which had occupied his thought and been the motive of his studies since he had been little more than a boy. It will no less have given evidence of the seriousness with which he regarded his work, and of the sacrifices which he and his wife were prepared to make in its interests. Mr. Aubrey de Vere has recorded for me a conversation he had with Patmore at the time when the poet was on the point of realizing his long-standing ambition. He writes:

"The reality of Patmore's poetical gift was evinced by the circumstance, *inter alia*, that it came and went wholly at its own will—not at the poet's. He called on me one day in a state of unusual excitement and animation. Its cause he did not care to conceal. There was, he assured me, one particular theme for Poetry, the more serious importance of which had been singularly missed by most poets of all countries, frequently as they had taken its name in vain. That theme was Love; not a mere caprice of fancy, or Love as, at best, a mere imaginative Passion—but Love in the deeper and softer sense of the word. The Syren woman had been often sung by the Pagan Poets of old time, and the Fairy woman, by the Troubadours of the Middle Ages. But that Love in which, as he affirmed, all the Loves centre, and that Woman who is the rightful sustainer of them all, the Inspiration of Youth, and the Consolation of Age, that

Love and that Woman, he asserted, had seldom been sung sincerely and effectually! He had himself long since selected that theme as the chief one of his poetry, but, often as he had made the attempt, it had never succeeded in his judgment. But a double change had come to him.

"The Poet had lately undergone a severe and painful malady[1] and for him the Daughters of Melody had been brought low—as he had feared, for ever. But his health had returned, and the Spring flowers had had their resurrection. He had made one attempt more, and this time a successful one . . . He had written with a facility he had never known before; and his poem was already nearly finished. In a few weeks more 'The Angel in the House' appeared."

It is evident that "The Angel in the House" means here the first instalment of the poem, "The Betrothal." Patmore has left a memorandum of the hopelessness he previously felt, and of the speed with which he wrote when the impulse came. When preparing to write the "Child's Purchase," his great ode on the Blessed Virgin Mary, he says:

"My comfort is that an apparently insuperable difficulty ahead is the best excitement of the intellect that can be—as I know by experience, for I felt the same hopeful helplessness when I was preparing to write the 'Angel.'"[2]

And again he writes:

"The first Book of the Angel in the House took only six weeks in the writing, though I had thought of little else for several years before."

Though with regard to some few points of interest in connection with the poem there is a deficiency of direct evidence, I may endeavour to give some idea of Patmore's motives for fashioning it as he has done, and to ascertain to what extent it is auto-

[1] Patmore told Dr. Garnett that this illness had been actually fruitful of poetic impulse.

[2] Quoted with context, pp. 255-256.

biographical—as containing distinctly personal traits of the poet.

As regards metre, Patmore used to say that he had adopted the rhymed octosyllabic quatrain as being a gay and jocund measure, eminently adapted to a story of successful love and happy marriage. In this he probably judged rightly, though, as I have already said, he had never shown any disposition towards intricate or elaborate metrical forms. He was in all probability aware that in writing in this simple metre he might be laying himself open to ridicule and parody, and there is evidence that he adopted it with full deliberation. I remember, in quite the early years of our friendship, telling him that the simplicity and ease of the verse seemed to me to have detracted somewhat from the popular estimation of the poem, by leading many to take it less seriously; and that he replied, inverting a well-known saying of Byron's, that "easy reading was often d—d hard writing." And later, when, after the appearance of the "Odes," critics were wont to praise them at the expense of the "Angel," he showed himself jealous for the earlier poem, and attributed the preference to the fashion which then demanded more complex metre.

About 1890 he writes:

"'The Athenæum,' (Dec. 1890), still looks upon the poetry of the 'Angel in the House' and the 'Victories of Love' as 'garrulous' and 'prattling.' That comes of my 'vehicle,' a modest and unpretentious metre. Were Bismarck to take Mr. —— or Mr. —— a drive in a tax-cart, they would never guess, if they were not told, that the Prince was anything better than a grocer. Though I travel the same ground and at the same level, I have immensely gained in reputation with these ninnies by mounting a 'mail-phaeton.' I have even had some thoughts of re-writing the 'Angel' for them, in the metre of the 'Unknown Eros.'"

The scheme too of the poem seems to have been no less carefully adapted to Patmore's purpose. It is divided into sections, in each of which the narrative is preceded by "Preludes." These deal with the more abstract problems of love, and bear a recognisable though subtle and not too obvious relation to the action. This method gives the poet scope for indulging his tendency to more ideal thought, without compromising the simplicity and terseness of the actual narrative. There is nothing to be found among Patmore's memoranda or recorded conversations which throws light upon his motive for adopting this scheme. There is no evidence that he had intentionally followed classical precedent, though his method bears a distinct resemblance to that of the Greek tragedians, in whose work the Chorus fulfils a somewhat similar function to that of the "Preludes." It seems to me probable that Patmore's scheme was formed independently, and arose spontaneously to meet the exigencies of his design.

It has often been said that Patmore's poetry is exclusively subjective. This criticism is true in a strictly limited sense. He has, as was almost inevitable, worked from his own feelings and experience: incidents which actually occurred to him are introduced, and the hero is not infrequently made the mouthpiece of Patmore's own opinions. Still, not only is there a general change of circumstance, but I can find no single passage in the earlier instalments of the "Angel" which seems to me to realize Patmore as an individual, or to give anything like distinct portraiture of him. The intention to avoid "personality" applied to the hero equally with the heroine of the poem: Patmore and his wife were never meant to correspond to "Felix" and "Honoria" as individuals; but in the case of the hero the

identification is even more completely avoided. Patmore was neither consciously nor unconsciously the subject of his own poem.

It is curious that in the later portions, "Faithful for Ever" and the "Victories of Love," "Frederick," who figures as the unsuccessful suitor, and whose experiences are therefore so different from those of Patmore and of Vaughan, is so described in certain passages as vividly to recall the poet's own personality. The following, for example, is eminently characteristic of Patmore's attitude in controversy: possibly it may be founded on one of his colloquies with his wife before they had reached common ground in religious matters; though Emily Patmore would not have shown such deficiency in humour as "Jane" does. Jane quotes St. Paul's authority for

> "A little worldliness in life.
>
> He smiled and said that he knew all
> Such things as that without St. Paul!
> And once he said, when I with pain
> Had got him just to read Romaine,
> 'Men's creeds should not their hopes condemn.
> Who wait for heaven to come to them
> Are little like to go to heaven
> If logic's not the devil's leaven!'
> I cried at such a wicked joke,
> And he, surprised, went out to smoke."

Other passages in "Faithful for Ever," which seem to me to convey similar portraiture are these—

> "When he stands,
> So stern and tall, before the fire,"

or when Jane has, to please Frederick,

> "Bought
> A gay new bonnet, gown and shawl,"

(no doubt much *too* "gay"),

> "Frederick was not pleased at all;
> For though he smiled and said 'How smart!'
> I feel, you know, what's in his heart."

I think too that the description of Frederick's attitude after the loss of his wife, described in the "Victories of Love," is scarcely less characteristic of Patmore.

These touches of self-portraiture were no doubt introduced unconsciously. If it be supposed that Patmore was in any degree aware of the resemblance, the following conjecture may be hazarded. In the earlier poem, in which the experiences of the hero were essentially his own, he was especially on his guard to exclude "personality." In the later the motive was less strong, and self-portraiture crept in, though it was no part of his original design.

For some of the subordinate characters in the poem, those who knew Patmore and his circle at the time when it was written fancy they find originals, mainly among his wife's relations. In "the Dean" there may survive some traits of Dr. Andrews, Emily Patmore's father, whom Patmore never saw, and who must be sketched, if sketched at all, from his daughter's reminiscences. "Mary" has been thought by some to resemble Georgiana, Emily's youngest sister, and other characters to convey traces of portraiture. But such recognitions vary considerably, and I cannot find that Patmore gave to any his own authority. It seems therefore useless to seek for any biographical material in identifications which are at best conjectural, and safer to conclude that Patmore's intention was to keep clear of "personality" in the subordinate, as well as in the principal characters.

The "Betrothal" was read before publication by Tennyson and Aubrey de Vere. The latter writes:

"When the 'Angel in the House' was in the printer's hands, a portion of it was sent to me, previous to publication, while I was on a visit to Alfred Tennyson and his wife in the Isle of Wight. We read it sitting on a cliff close to the sea, with their eldest child, then about two or three years old, playing near us; and I had the satisfaction of writing word to Patmore that we had greatly enjoyed that reading."

Tennyson's criticism had been invited, as is shown by the following letter:

"Farringford,
"October 30, 1854.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,

"Many thanks for your volumes. I still hold that you have written a poem which has a fair chance of immortality; tho' I have praised (Landor-like) so many poems that perhaps my praise may not be thought much of: but such as it is, accept it, for it is quite sincere. There are passages want smoothing here and there; such as:

'Her power makes not defeats but pacts,'

a line that seems to me hammered up out of old nail-heads.

"Others want correcting on another score as

'I slid
My curtain,'[1]

which is not English. You mean I made my curtain slide and that (even so exprest) would not be good. There is nothing for it but

'I *drew* my curtain.'

"*Little* objections of this calibre, I could make; but, as for the whole, I admire it exceedingly, and trust that it will do our age good, and not ours only. The women ought to subscribe for a statue for you.

"Ever yours,
"A. TENNYSON."

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[1] Patmore altered this sentence to "My curtain slid," making the construction absolute. There is however authority for the use of "slide" as a transitive verb: cf. Donne, "Slide we in here a note by the way," and such phrases as "he slid his hand into mine."

Patmore appears to have been nervous about the publication of his poem. His father had but recently issued "My Friends and Acquaintance," which, as I have related, was very unfavourably received by the critics. This, Coventry Patmore thought, might cause prejudice against his book, and he feared that he might be identified with the author of the work above named. He writes to Monckton Milnes:

"'The Times' unintentionally did me a great injury. Its onslaught, headed 'Patmore's Friends and Acquaintances' was by the Public universally supposed to mean me; for my father had written nothing for a quarter of a century and I was the only Patmore known to them by name."[1]

He had however, if he published anonymously or under a pseudonym, to account for the inclusion in the forthcoming volume of certain poems printed in "Tamerton Church Tower" which had been published under his own name. D. G. Rossetti writes, November, 1854:

"I have read Patmore's poem which he sent to me, and about which I might say a good deal of all kinds, if I felt up to it to-night; but I don't. He was going to publish (and had actually printed the title) with the pseudonym of C. K. Dighton; but was induced at the last moment to cancel the title, as well as a marvellous note at the end, accounting for some part of the poem being taken out of his former book by some story of a butterman and a piece of waste paper, or something of that sort! (I see that my description is as lucid as the note.)"

What this note was I have been quite unable to ascertain. No other record of it seems to be in existence. Finally Patmore determined to publish anonymously, though the authorship must have been a rather open secret.

[1] This is not strictly correct, but it is true that P. G. Patmore's later work had been for the most part anonymous.

The reception of this first instalment of the poem by Patmore's literary friends was most cordial. His wife, writing to Mrs. Gemmer,[1] a life-long friend of Patmore's, and herself a poetess, says:

"I am commissioned by Coventry to send you a copy of his new poem, of which he begs your acceptance. He had told me to send it, curiously enough, the very day I got your letter, in which you 'hope you may come across it.' You must forgive my vanity if I tell you a few of the great things that have been said about it. W. S. Landor writes a letter full of somewhat senile ecstasy, which I will not quote. Carlyle calls on Coventry to quit the field of fiction and bring his powers to bear upon the world of fact, which, for the want of the like of him, is what it is,—this, I mean, *à propos* of power displayed in this book. Ruskin writes 'I cannot tell you how much I like your book. I had no idea you had this high kind of power. The book will be, or at least ought to be, one of the most popular in the English language, and *blessedly* popular, doing good wherever it goes.'

"Tennyson writes: 'You have begun an immortal poem, and if I am no false prophet, it will not be long in winning its way into the hearts of the people.'

"I quote from memory, but I am not far wrong. A friend of Tennyson's, Aubrey de Vere, himself a poet, writes in the same tone, and adds, 'Alfred said to me,' (he was with Tennyson when he received the book) 'that your poem, when finished, will add one to the very small number of great poems which the world has had.'

"Do not laugh at my boasting. I have not copied out these same things for *any one* before, but somehow I feel as if you would sympathize with me in the pleasure they have caused me."

Patmore, in one of his autobiographical memoranda, records Robert Browning's anticipation of the poem's success. He writes:

"When the 'Angel in the House' first came out, Browning said of it, 'I do not say that it will be now, or soon; but,

[1] Known to the reading public as "Gerda Fay."

some time or other, this will be the most popular poem that was ever written.'"

Carlyle's and Ruskin's letters to which Mrs. Patmore alludes are given, among other letters to Patmore, in vol. ii. Ruskin indeed, who had long been on friendly terms with Patmore, became from this time a faithful admirer and eager advocate of his work, both privately and in print. In the appendix to "Elements of Drawing," he writes, "Coventry Patmore, whose 'Angel in the House' is a most finished piece of writing, and the sweetest analysis we possess of quiet modern domestic feeling." Again in 'Sesame and Lilies,' he quotes a long passage from the 'Angel'[1], and adds "you cannot read him too often or too carefully: as far as I know, he is the only living poet who always strengthens and purifies: the others sometimes darken, and nearly always depress and discourage, the imagination they deeply seize." Later, when a further instalment of the poem entitled "Faithful for Ever" was castigated in the "Critic," he wrote to the editor a letter which is worth printing as a piece of criticism apart from its immediate relation to my subject (see vol. ii.).

Rossetti's opinion of the poem is given in the following letter written Jan. 23, 1855:

"You asked me how I liked 'The Angel in the House'. Of course it is very good indeed, yet will one ever want to read it again? The best passages I can recollect now are the one about 'coming where women are,' for the simile of the frozen ship, and the part concerning the 'brute of a husband.' From what I hear, I should judge that, in spite of idiots in the Athenæum and elsewhere, the book will be of use to the author's reputation,—a resolute poet, whom I saw a little while back, and who means to make his book bigger than the Divina Commedia, he tells me . . ."

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[1] Third prelude to Cant. III, in editions of 1890 and 1896.

Rossetti seems to have feared from the first that the poem would run to too great length; and when "Faithful for Ever" appeared he writes again as follows—parodying the opening of Tennyson's poem "Love and Duty":

"I wrote to Patmore after reading his book, which he sent me, saying all that I (most sincerely) admired in it, but perhaps leaving some things unsaid; for what can it avail to say some things to a man after his third volume? 'Of love which never finds its published close, what sequel' And how many"?

Monckton Milnes seems to have anticipated success for the poem, as is shown by the following letter, which also explains the scope of Patmore's design:

"British Museum, Dec. 23, 1854.

"MY DEAR MR. MILNES,

"I am very glad to hear of the impartial compliment my volume received from you, though I regret that the copy I left at your house as soon as the book came out should not have reached you in time to save you the trouble of getting it from the publisher.

"I sincerely hope that your presages of success may be fulfilled, chiefly because there are five books yet to come to complete the poem; and, though I could go on *composing* contentedly enough and confidently enough, *publishing* is a different matter, and I have made up my mind to stop at the *third* failure.

"Believe me, my dear Mr. Milnes,

"Faithfully yours,

"COVENTRY PATMORE."

It might have been expected that a poem which had aroused such warm admiration in men of high literary reputation would have at once made its way in public esteem. This anticipation however was not realized, and Patmore was bitterly disappointed at the failure of the critics fully to recognize its

value. On Jan. 30, 1855, he writes to Monckton Milnes:

"If you have seen the minor literary journals, you will be somewhat surprised by the contempt with which the 'Angel' has, in most cases, been received. The Literary Gazette says it is so bad that it would pass for a joke, but for the respectable name of the Publisher.[1] The Athenæum goes out of its way to write a contemptuous squib in rhyme;[2] the Westminster laughs at it in a minor notice, and so on. One column of very qualified praise in the Examiner (as I *hear*, for I never see any criticisms) and a candid notice in the Press (which nobody reads), is all I have got in return for years of preparation and labour, and an infinite sacrifice of worldly advantage to self and others. Unless the Quarterlies come to my rescue, my poetical career is at an end: for though, while men like yourself, Carlyle, Tennyson, and Ruskin think highly of what I do, my confidence cannot be exhausted, my ability to print books at my own cost, and to devote to verse time that could be turned to immediate advantage, is.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"COVENTRY PATMORE."

Patmore's estimate of the press notices is not confirmed by facts. In this instance his usual

[1] J. Parker and Son.

[2] The notice in "The Athenæum" began thus: "The gentle reader we apprise That this new Angel in the House Contains a tale not very wise About a person and a spouse. The author, gentle as a lamb, Has managed his rhymes to fit; And haply fancies he has writ Another *In Memoriam*," etc. This parody, which seems to me to show little more ingenuity than critical judgment, was written by Mr. H. F. Chorley, a musical and literary critic, whose biographer fixes on him its authorship, which might well have been left unclaimed. Probably Chorley attacked Patmore as one of the Præ-Raphaelite circle. That between him and the P. R. B. there was no love lost is clear from the following extract from the Præ-Raphaelite journal (p. 297-8): "In my progress I heard some one—by his looks an Academician—observe in reference to one of Millais's pictures, that no sarcasm could be too fierce for such absurdities; and another, a Frenchman-cropped, monkey-looking being (Mr. Chorley)—was in ecstasies of amusement, which he made it his care to communicate."

optimism about his own affairs seems to have failed him. I have before me a digest of the opinions of the press on this poem, and these seem to me to be, on the whole, fairly—for an anonymous work, unusually—favourable. As however Patmore "never saw any criticisms," he probably judged by results, and the earlier notices did not in fact sell the book.

The second instalment of the poem, "The Espousals," followed in 1856, by which time the earlier poem was to some extent winning appreciation—not however sufficient to remunerate the author or to encourage him to proceed. He writes again to Monckton Milnes, September 1, 1856:

"My dear Mr. Milnes,

"I am delighted with what you tell me of the 'Angel's' increasing influence. The *total silence* of the press about the 'Espousals,' in face of things that are being said and written *privately* about it by men of the best literary name in England is very odd and unexpected. I have written (resolving not to die of dignity) to Mr. Reeve to ask him to give me a 'puff.' Unless the Edinburgh, the Quarterly or the Times neutralizes the neglect of the rest of the press by giving the book a notice some twenty years or so before the usual time for noticing *good* poetry after its publication, the appearances of the 'Angel' are likely to be *very* few and far between. The first volume had a little sale. I suppose because the small reviewers—who are the greatest flunkies in the world—thought the author was a country gentleman of landed property. But now it has transpired that he is 'not a chartist or a lord,'[1] it seems to be all over with their compliments and my prospects of the kind of success which will pay my printer's bill.

"Believe me, my dear Mr. Milnes,

"Ever faithfully yours,

"Coventry Patmore."

I do not know whether the letter to the Editor of the "Edinburgh Review" was written. If it was, it

[1] "Angel in the House," Epilogue to "The Betrothal."

was long in bearing fruit. It was not till January 1858, that an article on Patmore's poem appeared in that periodical. This admirable critique was from the pen of Mr. Aubrey de Vere, who subsequently republished it among his collected essays. The effect of it was, I am told, immediate and important, causing at once a demand for the poem, and establishing Patmore's right to rank among the foremost poets of the day. Another review which, written later, was of conspicuous service to the fortunes of the poem was by Dr. Garnett ("Macmillan's Magazine," 3. 121), who again in 1879, when popular appreciation was ebbing, did much towards re-establishing it by his excellent selection "Florilegium Amantis."

Mr. de Vere, who modestly refrains from acknowledging the authorship of the Review in the "Edinburgh," writes for me concerning the "Angel":

> "The circulation of it at first was slow; but a few prominent periodicals, among others the Edinburgh Review, criticised it with copious extracts which spoke for themselves. The poem became widely popular both in England and in America, and at a later time, when published in a cheaper form, I was informed that more than 100,000 copies of it had been quickly sold.
>
> "The Poet had had Faith in his Theme; and though of his readers some had smiled dubiously, a larger number had smiled gratefully. . . . .
>
> "After this great success there came to Patmore, I believe, one of the happiest periods of his life. The success was deserved, and it therefore gratified an ambition which had in it nothing of a selfish character. His life was a bright one, though his worldly circumstances were narrow and precarious, and though he had to work hard upon other labours besides the poetic."

I cannot find any record showing what the remaining four sections of the poem were to have been. Of these, two only appeared, "Faithful for Ever" in 1860,

and "Victories of Love" in 1863. The latter was first published in "Macmillan's Magazine," Patmore receiving for it a hundred pounds. No doubt the strain of his wife's illness made it necessary for him to realize an immediate profit rather than await the more tardy fruits of publication. There is good reason for supposing that the later of these owed its subject to the poet's personal experiences and took its colour from his wife's dangerous illness, which in 1860, as has been recorded, had almost proved fatal. It may also be surmised that after her death, in 1862, Patmore had not the heart to complete his scheme, which apparently contemplated giving in greater detail the subsequent life of Felix and Honoria, the hero and heroine of the earlier part of the poem. It is doubtful whether the completion of the design on the lines originally laid down would have been altogether a success—whether the interest could have been fully sustained. The mere glimpse of the successful and happy life of the wedded couple, which occurs incidentally, is probably more felicitous than a more elaborate description could have been. Still, for the poem as it first appeared in the four sections, much re-arrangement and welding of the parts was needed to give it organic unity and completeness; and, though it would be an impossible task to show fully and in detail how the result was reached, some few of the more salient points of revision may be recorded.

It is obvious that in "Faithful for Ever" Patmore intended the strongest contrast in subject with the earlier part of the poem. This had pictured a successful courtship and the happy marriage of two people in all respects suited to each other: in the sequel, Frederick, the unsuccessful suitor of the lady who figures as heroine in the earlier poem, is caught on the rebound, and by chance rather than by choice

marries a woman who is apparently little suited to him, but who by virtue of essential womanliness vindicates her position as wife, and becomes by degrees a true partner to her husband. In the final section, the "Victories of Love," this union, so far completed on earth, is consecrated and established as eternal by her death.

In these later instalments Patmore adopted a new scheme and a change of metre. The poem, with the exception of "The Wedding Sermon," is cast as a series of letters passing between the different characters; and the metre, still "iambic" and octosyllabic, is in consecutive instead of in alternate rhyme, this no doubt seeming to the poet more suitable to the epistolary scheme. The new form inevitably alters the essential mode of presentment. Letters, to be of interest, necessarily require some traits of individual character, and the personality of the writers is consequently more vividly pourtrayed in the later than in the earlier part of the poem. This change involved some pitfalls for the poet, which he ultimately escaped only by most careful revision. In the earlier portion the principal characters had appeared as types rather than as individuals, and it was difficult to re-introduce them in the new atmosphere without compromising their original ideality. For example: in the first draught of the poem there is a letter from "Honoria," rather "kittenish" in tone, which seems to strike an altogether false note. This letter, under revision, is somewhat altered and is assigned to "Mildred," who in the earlier portion is sketched with more "personality" than Honoria; while the latter now appears only by allusion, and disappears as a correspondent. Such changes as this, an extensive rearrangement of the parts, considerable omissions, the toning down of "Jane," who in the first presentment is pictured as hopelessly and

irreclaimably common, and a multitude of improvements in phrase, served to give the entire poem such unity and coherence as might obviate any appearance of departure from an original design. Thus completed, the four sections together came to be known as the "Angel in the House," which inclusive title has superseded the original subdivisions.

In revising the poem, Patmore was greatly aided by two friends, Mr. de Vere and Dr. Garnett, whose letters (given in vol. ii.), show the influence which they exerted. Mr. de Vere was especially anxious that the poem should be relieved of anything which might be considered "poetical baggage," and Dr. Garnett, with keen critical insight, calls attention to inequalities in tone, atmosphere and composition.

Patmore, who was himself prepared to bestow infinite pains upon the work of others even if it did not greatly interest him, frequently consulted his friends when any of his writings were under revision, accepting their advice only as it commended itself to him. Among his letters is a very extensive series written by Father Gerard Hopkins, S.J.,[1] whom he consulted in 1883 when preparing for publication a revised edition of his poems. The criticisms contained in them are most precise and technical—too much so to be of interest to the general reader; but it is evident that they have all been most carefully considered by Patmore, who scores those he accepts as "done," and takes no notice of others. He could however occasionally be forced into accepting a correction which did not commend itself to him. Two such instances have come to my knowledge. For the first: a friend of his was extremely anxious that a certain passage in "Faithful for Ever"

[1] See vol. ii.

should disappear in a new issue. It was of what I may call the physiologico-sentimental type, which abounds in the writings of Michelet. The friend who desired its elimination was unmarried, and Patmore wrote: "When you are married you will take a very different view of the passage;" to which the friend replied, "If I thought that marriage would make me like it, I would vow to remain single." Patmore made no reply to this, but the re-issue appeared without the lines criticised. For the second case: in a new edition of the "Odes" an important line seemed to have been altered for the worse. Patmore admitted that the original version had been better, but said he had altered it under the urgent pressure of a friend. He was however, as a rule, most studiously careful and resolute in revision. He writes, "An imperfect line has always lain upon my conscience like a sin, and I have never rested until—sometimes after many years of vain endeavour—I have got it right;" and about the "Angel," referring to the 1878 edition, he says, "If ever you read the poem again you will find it much the brighter for the few seemingly trifling omissions and changes I have made." Patmore always maintained to me that the latter half of the poem was superior to the former, an opinion to which few of his admirers will be likely to assent.

As regards the ultimate success of the "Angel," it is clear that the Edinburgh article of January, 1858, was a landmark in the progress of its reputation. From this time success was practically assured: reviewers became generally more respectful, and the public bought largely. Its fortunes were no doubt subject to considerable fluctuation. Ruskin, who took an almost fatherly interest in the poem, anticipated injury to its circulation from Patmore's

change of creed and second marriage,[1] a prophecy which I have no doubt was in some measure fulfilled. Fashion too at a later time impaired its reputation. A new school of poetry arose, with Mr. Swinburne for its leader, which set public taste in search of greater complexity of metre, "more refulgent colour, more fiery emotion, a more revolutionary aspect of life."[2]

The adherents of the new school were not remiss in their endeavour to cast contempt on Patmore's more quiet and domestic Muse, and, so far as the critical press is a gauge of reputation, his fame suffered severely. It seems impossible to ascertain how far such contemptuous notice as he at one time received affected the sale of his poem, nor can any accurate estimate be given of the circulation ultimately reached. I think however that it may be confidently stated that at the time of Patmore's death, without reckoning the popular edition published by Messrs. Cassell, the sale had amounted to between two hundred thousand and a quarter of a million copies.

[1] See letter, vol. ii.

[2] Quoted from Mr. Gosse's article in the "North American Review" for March, 1897, which gives from an early copy of "The Angel" many passages omitted from the work as it finally appeared.

CHAPTER XII

RELATIONS WITH TENNYSON AND OTHER FRIENDS

AS soon as he was definitely embarked on a poetical career, Patmore was most anxious to make the acquaintance of Tennyson, who was already in his opinion the great poet of the day, and for whose work he then had an almost unlimited admiration. I can find no record either of the time or place of their first meeting. In all probability it was through the Procters that they became known to each other. The acquaintance soon ripened into intimacy: they met constantly, and used to take long walks together at night, often prolonging them into the early morning. Patmore's admiration for Tennyson as a man fully equalled his appreciation of his poetry. For years he regarded friendship with him as one of the great privileges of his life: his own marriage caused no modification of his feelings, nor interuption of intercourse: Tennyson's warm appreciation of Emily Patmore's character served to strengthen the tie; and when, three years later, Tennyson also married, Patmore was among the first to be introduced to the bride, of whom his judgment is given in letters to his wife, written from Coniston, where he was staying with the Tennysons: moreover, the two ladies entered on a friendship which could not but consolidate that of their husbands. The cordial relations of the wives is sufficiently proved by Mrs. Tennyson's letters to Emily Patmore (given in the second volume), which also show that Mrs. Patmore was of considerable assistance to Ten-

nyson in gathering material for the "Idylls of the King." Tennyson on the other hand, as has been shown, interested himself in the "Angel," when Patmore was preparing it for the press, gave him valuable criticisms, and what was no doubt of even more account, cordial encouragement.

The story of Patmore recovering for Tennyson the manuscript of "In Memoriam" has been often told. It may be given here in Patmore's own words. This memorandum appears to have been written about 1872.

"Tennyson had lodgings up two pair of stairs, in Mornington Place, Hampstead Road; and I, who was lately married, lived hard by. We used to dine together two or three times a week. He liked his port, but did not care much about its quality. He got his bottle daily from the nearest Public. He often read me bits of 'In Memoriam,' then unpublished. After he had left his lodgings three or four weeks, I received a letter from where he was staying in the country asking me to go to his old lodging and recover the manuscript of 'In Memoriam'—a long thin volume like a butcher's account book. He left it in a closet in which he kept his tea and bread-and-butter. The landlady assured me that no such book had been left there, and objected to my going to see; but I insisted, and, pushing by her, ran upstairs and found the manuscript. Tennyson afterwards gave this volume to Sir John Simeon, to whom also I gave the letter asking me to look for it."

Tennyson's letter to Patmore is as follows:

"Bonchurch, I.W.,
"Feb. 28th, 1850.

"My dear Coventry,

"I went up to my room yesterday to get my book of Elegies: you know what I mean, a long, butcher-ledger-like book. I was going to read one or two to an artist here: I could not find it. I have some obscure remembrance of having lent it to you: if so, all is well: if not, will you go to my old chambers and institute a rigorous inquiry? I was coming up to-day to look after it, but as the weather is so

furious I have yielded to the wishes of my friends to stop till to morrow. I shall be, I expect, in town to-morrow at 25 M.P., when I shall be glad to see you. At 9.10 p.m. the train in which I come gets into London. I shall be in Mornington Place about 10 o'clock I suppose. Perhaps you would in your walk Museum-ward call on Mrs. Lloyd and tell her to prepare for me. With best remembrances to Mrs. Patmore,

"Believe me ever yours,
"A. TENNYSON."

The manuscript was, on Jan. 27, 1898, presented to the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge, by Lady Simeon and Hallam, second Lord Tennyson.

Patmore's name has, I find, been associated with "In Memoriam" in another way. An idea seems to be prevalent that in the opening stanza,

"I hold it true with one who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things,"

Tennyson is alluding to Patmore. I should not have noticed the rumour had it not been urged on me repeatedly, and had I not seen it in print. The only passage in Patmore's poems which seems likely to have given rise to this notion occurs in "Felix, Love's Apology," published in "Tamerton Church Tower," and is as follows:

"For looking backward through his tears
With vision of maturer scope,
He smiles, as one dead joy appears
The platform of some better hope."

Patmore's volume was published in 1853, three years after "In Memoriam" appeared. It might be argued that the lines quoted had been written earlier, and that Tennyson had seen them in manuscript. But

the allusion is presumably to something already before the public; and though the stanza in "In Memoriam" has been a puzzle to many, I do not think that this solution can hold.

Commenced and established under such conditions, strengthened moreover by marriage—the very circumstance which so often leads to alienation—the friendship might well have been held likely to endure. It is notorious that it came to an untimely end; and as various reasons have been given for the estrangement, all more or less inadequate or altogether wide of the mark, it is necessary to give here an account of the breach which occurred and of its origin. Though this was in large measure due to special misadventure, there seem to have been other causes which should not be ignored.

When the friendship commenced, Patmore, considerably younger as a man, and not so far established as a poet, was altogether at Tennyson's feet; and, as he himself is reported to have said, "used to follow him about like a dog."

Such relations between the younger and the older poet (those who knew Patmore in later days may well find it hard to believe that his attitude could ever have been obsequious or parasitic) could not have continued permanently. As he advanced in years, in mental maturity, and in fixity of ideas, Patmore must necessarily have assumed a position of greater equality and of increasing independence. Some such readjustment in the relations of two persons of unequal age is a matter of constant necessity whether they be members of the same family or merely friends. The interval, if a paradox may be allowed, might be said to lie between parallel lines which are ever approaching each other, and is constantly becoming narrower with the lapse of time.

What is in earlier life a substantial superiority counts for little at more advanced stages, and equality is practically reached when both have attained to maturity. The acceptance of such gradual changes of relative position makes a distinct call on elasticity and generosity of temperament. On the one hand the original superiority has to be surrendered with grace; on the other the new independence has to be asserted without arrogance. In the present case I can imagine that the adaptation may have been attended with some slight friction. One may suspect on the one hand some survival of a predominance which was already a little out of date, while, on the other, Patmore may not have shown himself too tactful or conciliatory in asserting the independence due to his own more recently acquired maturity.

I think too that further causes of partial detachment are to be discerned in the critical attitude of the younger toward the older poet. Patmore was a frequent reviewer of Tennyson's work,[1] and it is evident from the earlier criticism that he had looked on him as a great, as potentially the ideal poet—a view which was maintained throughout the publication of the whole of Tennyson's earlier work. Meanwhile Patmore's own mystic tendencies had been developing, and these implied a somewhat new standard of poetry. One finds him, strangely enough, endeavouring to discover in the "Princess" some occult meaning, as though he were seeking to adjust it to his newly-conceived ideal—a reading which it obviously will not admit, and which Patmore would himself have eventually seen to be quite foreign to the poet's intention. And indeed this attempt to foist on the poem a secondary meaning is the more surprising, as its obvious design is so entirely conson-

[1] It appears certain that Tennyson never knew by whom these critiques were written.

ant with Patmore's view of the relation of the sexes. As to "Maud," while allowing that it contains lyrical passages of almost unrivalled delicacy and beauty (of which one,[1] possibly the best of all, had been published before), he condemns it on the ground that the main motive is obscured and ambiguous, that it is left doubtful whether the opinions expressed are subjective or dramatic, whether the poet or his hero is supposed to deliver them. Ultimately Patmore came to be of the same opinion as others among Tennyson's older friends (notably the late Edward Fitz-Gerald) that his substantial contribution to poetry had been completed with the publication of the earlier poems, and that the later were little more than an eking out of the original inspiration—that, as he often put it, "the earlier were Tennyson and the later Tennysonian." It can I think scarcely be doubted that the little "rift within the lute" of friendship had, at least on Patmore's part, been already started, and may have conduced to the eventual severance; and though this, as we shall see, was actually due to one of those misadventures which are almost as hopeless to obviate as they are lamentable, it may be surmised that growing mental alienation, combined with some degree of strain upon their original relations, had made each less anxious to seek explanation, or to revert to the old terms of friendship.

This misadventure I need not endeavour to describe, as it is fully explained by the following correspondence which passed at the time, and later, when for some nineteen years they had neither met nor corresponded. Patmore's letter was written at the instigation of Woolner, an intimate friend of both, who deeply regretted the alienation.

[1] The canto beginning, "Oh that 'twere possible," had been published in "The Tribute" in 1837.

"Hastings, June 5th, '81.

"My dear Mr. Tennyson,

"I have lately heard from Mr. Woolner that you are under the impression that I have, for a long time, ceased to desire the continuance of our former friendly intercourse, and he assured me that you have expressed a kindly wish that I should know, through him, that you were never aware of the last steps I took in order to maintain a position among your friends—a position of which, I need hardly say, I was always proud. I assure you that nothing was ever further from my thoughts than a voluntary neglect of your claims and my privilege.

"When my wife Emily was lying dead in my house, I received a letter from Mrs. Tennyson, inclosing for my signature a memorial which had been made and presented by you to the Committee of the Literary Fund for my advantage. I confess that I felt a little vexed at that Committee—several of whom, by the way, were my personal friends—having been asked by you to render me an assistance which, as it happened, I did not need, and which, had I needed it ever so much, I should not have sought; but, as I knew that the step had been taken by you wholly in kindness to me, I was so far from expressing any vexation, that in a few days I followed up a letter to Mrs. Tennyson, thanking her and you, but saying that my circumstances could not justify the grant of a gratuity from the Fund, by another letter asking you—as you were in town at the time—to come and spend an evening with me at my cottage at Hampstead, adding that [as] it was so short a time after my wife's death, I could not go to see you, as I should otherwise have done.

"I thought that, in asking you to come to see me at such a time, I was acting with marked respect and friendliness to you, and in the best way to remove any uncomfortable feeling which you may have had on account of the application to the Fund.

"But I never heard again from you; and you will own, I think, that I should have been forcing myself on your attention had I done other than wait for the next word to come from you. It will be a great satisfaction to me to know that my letter never reached you and the Post alone has been to blame for our having each attributed to the other some degree of neglect.

"Begging to be remembered very kindly to Mrs. Tennyson,

"Believe me,
"Dear Mr. Tennyson,
"Yours truly,
"C. PATMORE."

"Farringdon, Freshwater, Isle of Wight,
"June 11th, 1881.

"MY DEAR PATMORE,

"As I am perfectly certain that I never received any such letter as you allude to, I can only regret that this long estrangement has taken place—and pray you to believe that I am

"Always yours,
"A. TENNYSON."

The following letters refer to the application (in 1862) for a pension alluded to above :

"DEAR MRS. TENNYSON,

"I could not feel that the course which your kind anxiety for me induced you to take was one of which I was justified by my circumstances in reaping the fruits. I therefore wrote to Mr. Blewitt to say so, and to stop further proceedings before the business of the monthly meeting commenced. Whatever pressure may be upon me at present is I trust nothing more than I shall now be able to recover from, with the discharge of every obligation, in a moderate period of industry and economy.

"With sincere thanks for your kind wishes and endeavours and expressions of sympathy, I am,

"Dear Mrs. Tennyson,
"Yours most truly,
"COVENTRY PATMORE."

"Elm Cottage, North Road, Hampstead,
"July 9, 1862.

"SIR,

"I have just heard that an application has been made for me to the Royal Literary Fund by Mr. and Mrs. Tennyson. Though done with the kindest intentions, this has been with an entire misapprehension of my circumstances and wishes, and I beg you to favour me by at once

stopping any proceedings which may have been commenced in consequence of that application, and by further communicating the substance of this letter to any persons who may have been acquainted with that application.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"COVENTRY PATMORE.

"Octavian Blewitt, Esq.
"4 Adelphi Terrace."

The history of this application for a pension is as follows. Mrs. Patmore's long illness had necessarily been a severe strain on her husband's very limited resources, and of this his more intimate friends must have been aware. A lady, more distinguished for zeal than for discretion in the service of her friends, desired to help him, and, without consulting him, set on foot a memorial for a grant from the Literary Fund, asking Tennyson, among the first, to give it his support. This he did without hesitation, thinking no doubt that the proposal had received Patmore's sanction. He can scarcely be blamed for assuming that Patmore was a party to the scheme, nor could he have been expected to be so punctilious as to ask for a more direct authority, or to have anticipated so scrupulous a reluctance. For Patmore the whole transaction was undoubtedly wounding both to pride and self-respect; especially as it must have seemed to him like an attempt to make capital for him out of his wife's death. But he appears, at least eventually, to have taken a just view of Tennyson's share in it.

There can be no doubt that the facts indicated in these letters were the immediate cause of the alienation that ensued, but they account for it only as far as Patmore is concerned. The letter which miscarried would no doubt have given convincing proof of the value which he set on Tennyson's friendship: indeed that he should have written to him at all at

such a time was a mark of affection which could scarcely have been claimed or expected. When a severe bereavement has befallen a friend, it is from the other side that proofs of sympathy usually proceed; and, as Tennyson had had a sincere admiration and affection for Emily Patmore, he no doubt felt so much participation in his friend's loss as would ordinarily make condolence easy to express and doubly welcome to receive. It is obvious however that there was at this time no personal communication from him, nor can I find later any trace of messages of sympathy or inquiries such as might have been made through any one of the many friends they continued to have in common. Patmore was allowed to drift away in his sorrow without help from the friendship on which, up to that time, he had specially relied. Nevertheless, there is every reason to believe that this negligence was due to no heartlessness or indifference on Tennyson's part. Probably he either assumed Patmore's confidence in his sympathy and thought the expression of it superfluous, or he may have postponed and finally put aside a friendly duty which was irksome to fulfil. His utter unconsciousness of being in any degree responsible for the alienation seems to point to this conclusion. Even after the long estrangement which followed, the above letter of Tennyson's, though it explained away the original ground of offence, was scarcely such as to lead to a renewal of friendship. A very few additional words would have made the whole difference; but those words were not written, and, to a sensitive and proud nature such as Patmore's, the *impasse* necessarily seemed hopeless as ever. I quite remember his telling me that the result of the correspondence was such as to afford no opening for a return to the former intimacy. Nevertheless I firmly believe that it was Tennyson's desire completely

to remove all obstacles to reconciliation. At this time he seldom wrote letters with his own hand: he saw in this case the necessity of making this unusual effort, while he may be supposed to have unconsciously economized the labour. He consequently failed in what I believe to have been his fixed intention. Patmore did however so far accept this explanation as to send Tennyson a copy of the "Odes," of which he received no more than a formal acknowledgment.[1] Had Tennyson expressed the warm admiration which, his son assures me, he felt for these poems, much would have been done towards repairing the breach.

The present Lord Tennyson tells me that his father, to the end of his life, used frequently to wonder why Patmore had "given him up"; that he always spoke of him with respect and affection, and regretted the estrangement.

But of Patmore's own attitude there is much more to be said. In the first place it seems surprising that this effort at reconciliation was not made earlier. It was so simple a matter, one would think, to ask an intimate friend whether a letter which met with no reply had ever come to hand. That he did not do so at once is I think to be accounted for partly by the not unnatural expectation that Tennyson would be the first to break the silence, partly by the circumstances in which the miscarriage occurred. Patmore was at the time overwhelmed by the loss he had undergone, and few can face such grief without some morbid increase of sensitiveness. It is clear

[1] "Aldworth, Haslemere, Surrey,
"July 28, '81.

"My dear Patmore,

"Many thanks for your 'Unknown Eros,' which reached me this morning.

"Yours very truly,
"A. Tennyson."

that, whatever germ of alienation there may have been, Patmore, up to the time of his wife's death, still regarded Tennyson as his greatest friend; indeed he had put this friendship at so high a level as to make all others shrink to the rank of mere acquaintanceship (see above, p. 136). It cannot have been defect, more probably it was excess of affection which made him take the apparent rebuff so hardly. Even when the stress of bereavement was somewhat abated, he was still living the life of a recluse, seeking and seeing few if any of his former friends. Then came a severe illness, his journey to Rome, his change of creed, his second marriage; and I have no doubt that in connection with both these later steps he anticipated a severance of old friendships, feeling doubtful whether he would be received by former associates on the old terms, and having himself, at first, scruples about renewing or forming ties with those who were without the pale. Doubtless too the new interests served to obscure the old; while the attitude of adverse criticism towards his former friend, not altogether unaffected by a still lingering sense of injury, may so far have developed meanwhile as to diminish his desire for reconciliation. Certainly his spoken criticism of Tennyson was increasingly severe and his thoughts of him bitter. Equally certain was it that much of the old admiration survived, though obscured by the later ill-feeling. I have often, after listening to some trenchant diatribe against Tennyson the Poet and Tennyson the man, and when the talk had for some time passed to other subjects, purposely alluded to some one of the earlier poems—when the old enthusiasm would break forth in words no less forcible than those in which the former strictures had been conveyed. Often too in our walks he would quote passages from the favourites of old days, evidently with undiminished admiration.

It was obvious also that all that he had to say against his former friend was derived from the period of their constant intercourse,—that what he now quoted in disparagement of Tennyson had formerly proved incompatible neither with extreme intimacy nor with enthusiastic admiration. The unfavourable colour which such matters had assumed in retrospect must therefore have been altogether of later origin; and the inevitable conclusion was that Patmore's judgment had been warped by the estrangement; that the present bitterness was proportionate to the original affection—in fact represented the old feelings reversed. A further confirmation of this view was forced on those who observed him, by the increased bitterness of his strictures after his removal to Lymington. Though the new home had been chosen without regard to its proximity to Farringford, I cannot but think that Patmore hoped and anticipated (he was far too proud ever to mention such a thought) that this change of abode would lead to a renewal of intercourse, and that he was disappointed when time passed and no overtures were made. That they were not made, seems to have been due to a sense of the awkwardness with which, after the long suspension of intercourse, the new approach would be attended; and this notwithstanding that, but a few years since, Patmore had cordially received the Lionel Tennysons as well as Horatio Tennyson and his family. It is deeply to be regretted that this occasion was not improved, that the overtures were not made. A reconciliation would have been welcomed by every friend and by every true admirer of either poet; and, as a matter of less moment though of peculiar interest, one would have been glad to see how far the renewal of friendly relations served to modify Patmore's attitude of hostile criticism.

It is however only fair to record that this dispar-

agement was confined to private conversation, and that, to the last, every word that Patmore published concerning Tennyson was courteous and appreciative. This fact may well serve as an answer to those, if any there are, who consider that jealousy of Tennyson's greater success was a motive of the detraction.

It is pleasant to think that friendly messages passed[1] between Tennyson and Patmore some two years before the former's death; and that Patmore made every effort to be present at his old friend's funeral, though a misadventure defeated his intention. He travelled to London to be in readiness; but, through an inadvertence, the invitation was sent to the old home at Hastings, was forwarded thence to Lymington and sent on to him in London, where it arrived just too late to be of service.

Those who hope that the old friends have met again where misunderstandings are no longer possible, may venture to believe that, on the one side, the old affection will have been found unimpaired, and that, on the other, the feelings, which always underlay and even caused detraction and bitterness here, have alone survived the change.

This appears to be the only definite breach which occurred between Patmore and any of his friends. Neither in the correspondence nor in any available records can I find a trace of any similar estrangement. It is true that his change of creed, possibly even to a greater degree his second marriage, caused an interruption in intercourse with many of his

[1] Through Mr. Gosse.

friends, while the life of almost complete seclusion which followed these events postponed, for a time, its renewal. There are indications too that he was maliciously misrepresented as being unapproachable. Most of his early friendships however were renewed after an interval. Some few, mainly from lack of opportunity, finally lapsed. There are also traces of rough but not unfriendly sparring by word and letter with some of his old associates, whom too he allowed himself to criticise freely, though in no unjust or captious spirit. But in no single case do I find him the originator of any breach of friendly relations. On the other hand, I know that he proved capable of exceptional patience and magnanimity under serious provocation. For example: one of his oldest friends, who preserved ostensibly the most cordial relations with Patmore, was constantly unscrupulous and virulent in detraction, and spared no one, least of all those with whom he was most intimate. He was under deep obligations to Patmore, who had spent infinite pains upon his writings, a task which was all the more onerous, as these works were not specially congenial to him. All this, though cordially acknowledged, failed to secure an exception in Patmore's favour, who became, no less than others, the subject of habitual detraction. Patmore was warned of the treachery to which he was being made a victim, but answered that "he had all along thought it highly probable that he was one of the many objects of ——'s evil speaking, but had not chosen on that account to part company with a friend of many years."

The following letter is evidence of a misunderstanding which arose through no fault of Patmore's, and of his anxiety to remove it. Everyone knows how acute was Browning's sensitiveness to any attack upon his wife.

"Hastings,
"Oct. 13, 1884.

"My dear Browning,

"It is long since I have received any letter giving me so much pleasure as is given me by that which I have just received from you. I had a sort of feeling that a passage of very coarse censure of your wife's poems, which was introduced into a review of mine in the 'Edinburgh' by the Editor after I *had seen and passed the proofs*, had produced—as it well might—a coolness on your part. I did not explain it at the time, because I wished to preserve for a space the etiquette of anonymity; and, when that space was over, it seemed too late. It has always however been a matter of much regret to me that I let the matter pass; and so I feel greatly rejoiced that you yourself have so kindly opened the way to my words.

"As you speak so kindly of my verses as well as Henry's I will ask you to accept my last little volume, which perhaps you have not seen.

"Believe me,
"My dear Browning,
"Yours ever truly,
"Coventry Patmore."

There are too other letters of Patmore's which show an eager desire to remove any grievance his friends had, or might be supposed to have against him, and a most punctilious regard for their feelings.

It may here be noted, in passing, how worrying to contributors, as well as fruitful in misunderstandings, the system of editorial interpolation must have been. It seems however in earlier days to have prevailed almost universally, even Southey having to complain of the liberties taken with his "copy." In the present instance the offending passage cannot be authoritatively identified, as Patmore has not preserved the article alluded to. But in a review of Tennyson's "Maud" I find the following passage marked by Patmore as an interpolation by the same editor: "Neither sound nor sense can reconcile us to such lines as

'Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down
by the wave.'"

The line selected is of course a specially fine one even for Tennyson, both in "sound" and "sense," or rather imaginative force. Another transaction with the editor of the "Edinburgh Review" may be recorded here. Patmore had received early sheets of the "Idylls of the King," which he forwarded to him with an offer to review the poem. The editor, in a letter which Patmore has preserved, calls attention to the immorality of the subject, which he castigates in no measured terms, at the same time singling out for condemnation on metrical grounds one or two monosyllabic lines which most readers would consider excellent. It seems almost certain that the editor was unacquainted with Sir Thomas Malory, in whose work the "immoralities" appear in far greater crudity, and meet with sympathy rather than with censure. In the review ("Edinburgh Review," 1859) which he wrote, Patmore shows with great delicacy and tact how the moral irregularities which the old legends pourtray are brought more closely home to the reader by the comparatively modern atmosphere with which the poet surrounds the action; and at the same time calls attention to the no doubt intentional predominance of English words in the poem, which would lead to the prevalence of monosyllabic lines. Lord Tennyson tells me that his father never knew by whom this review was written, but always looked on it as one of the best criticisms he had ever had. The authorship was ascertained after Tennyson's death, and is recorded in his biography.

The letters and memoranda which follow were written before and after the estrangement with Tenny-

son, and are divided accordingly. I may leave it to the reader to contrast or reconcile the various judgments recorded, or to discount them according to the feelings which may be considered to have inspired them. They are printed here in all respects as they came to hand.

"Ambleside, Aug., 1850.

"DEAREST,

"I like Mrs. Tennyson more and more every day. She seems to like me, as she talks more freely than a woman of such character would without a considerable faith in her hearers.

"Yesterday it was too wet to go to church, and Tennyson read prayers, lessons, and a sermon by Maurice. The more I talk with him the more I discover that I was right in thinking that he has given a defective notion of his faith in 'In Memoriam.' He is far above all the pantheistic 'religious faculty' humbug that taints so many half-geniuses in this day; and I am sure he would be horrified if he knew that any such men had been led by 'In Memoriam' to count him as a fellow-heathen. . . .

"I cannot enough value my advantage in seeing so much of Tennyson. It is a great good to me to find that I have my superior, which I have never found in the company of any one else. In the society of the nearly tip-top men, like Thackeray, Carlyle and Allingham, I feel an inferiority only of the means of expressing myself—and this I sometimes experience even with the next class of talented men, like M—— or L——. But in Tennyson I perceive a *nature* higher and wider than my own; at the foot of which I can sit happily and with love.

". . . Speaking of Allingham, it is surprising what an impression he has made on Tennyson. He speaks of his immense capacities, &c., &c., and you know how chary generally he is of his superlatives. Tennyson has pointed out so many beauties I did not before perceive in A.'s poems that I am coming round to his belief, that they are the best *first* book we have ever had.[1]

[1] Tennyson's encomium is probably somewhat overstated, under the influence of Patmore's friendship for Allingham.

"It is satisfactory to find that my own judgment of these poems, made in opposition to every body else's, is so confirmed. Curiously enough Tennyson saw the resemblance to Goethe immediately; and when I told him something about Allingham's manner and character, he dwelt upon the analogy over and over again, and seemed to contemplate for A. one of the most splendid careers ever gone through by an English Poet. He quite sees his faults, his heartless artistism,[1] and the great danger which may accrue from such extraordinary faculties united with so little wholesome feeling.

"We are going to call on Dr. Wordsworth (at the poet's house) a circuit of some forty or sixty miles. You will be glad to hear the Tennysons are thinking of taking a house near London. They have asked me to look for one for them about Mill Hill or Barnet.

"COVENTRY."

"Coniston, Aug., 1850.

"DEAREST,

"Nothing can be pleasanter than everything here. Tennyson is not writing just now, so that he gives all his time to amusing himself and us. Yesterday we were out almost all day upon the Lake. I find rowing capital exercise. I gave Tennyson Allingham's volume yesterday. A. would have had his head quite turned if he could have heard and seen Tennyson reading "Evening," "The Serenade," "The Pilot's Daughter" aloud among the water-lilies of the Lake. You know how much Allingham thinks of having his verses read in appropriate places and times. I was quite jealous of Tennyson's admiration of them. I never heard him praise any other living poet so freely, and he agrees with me in thinking that A. may achieve a very high position if he chooses. We dine at two o'clock, after which I get the most delightful *tête-à-tête* with Tennyson over his wine for two or three hours. You know what inestimable value I always attach to conversations with him. Imagine how rich I think myself now. After dinner, we go out (mind I generalize from two days' experience) again till dark, and after tea Tennyson reads aloud, or we talk till half-past ten or eleven. Yesterday Tennyson said a great

[1] Compare p. 143.

deal about you. He said he had never seen anything so enchanting as your innocence and simplicity of manner and mind. Do you not think yourself happy at having got among the poets? I have just had a long talk with Mrs. Tennyson. She seems to be in all respects worthy of her husband. She is a thorough lady—according to my standard. She is highly cultivated, but her mind seems always deeper than her cultivation, and her heart always deeper than her mind,—or rather constituting the main element of her mind. She is familiar with the best modern books, Ruskin, Maurice, Hare, &c. Her religion is at once deep and wide; so that upon this and most subjects I feel that I am most fortunate in having many opportunities forthcoming of talking with her.

"The Post waits.

"Yours,

"COVENTRY."

"Ambleside, Aug. 3rd, 1850.

"Mrs. Tennyson seems to be a very charming person, and I have already seen enough of her to feel that any description of her from a short acquaintance is sure to be unjust. Her manners are perfectly simple and lady-like, and she has that high cultivation which is only found among the upper classes in the country, and there very seldom. She has instruction and intellect enough to make the stock-in-trade of half-a-dozen literary ladies; but she is neither brilliant nor literary at all. Tennyson has made no hasty or ill-judged choice. She seems to understand him thoroughly, and, without the least ostentation or officiousness of affection, waits upon and attends to him as she ought to do. She is of very pleasing appearance, and looks about 32. Tent Lodge is the prettiest place in the world. A moderate sized house, built and furnished in quiet taste, standing on the foot of a hill that shelves to Coniston Lake, along which a small park, which belongs to the house, extends. There is a boat belonging to the house, and last night Tennyson rowed me half way down the Lake.

"COVENTRY."

All that follows was written after the estrangement.

"Tennyson is like a great child, very simple and very much self-absorbed. I never heard him make a remark of his own which was worth repeating, yet I always left him with a mind and heart enlarged. In any other man, his incessant dwelling upon trifles concerning himself, generally small injuries—real or imaginary—would be very tiresome. He has a singular incapacity for receiving at first hand, and upon its own merits, any new idea. He pooh-poohed my views on architecture, when I first put them before him; but some time afterwards Emerson praised them to him very strongly, and the next time I saw Tennyson he praised them strongly too, but without any allusion to his former speech of them. I was with Tennyson and Thackeray a day or two after T.'s appointment to be Laureate. Thackeray congratulated him, adding 'A Laureate indeed without guile.' T. told me that the office had been previously offered to and declined by Rogers and Sheridan Knowles."

"Among Tennyson's works, the second of the two little volumes published in 1842, contains, to my thinking, the greater part of all that is *essential* in his writings. It bears to them the same relation that Keats's little volume issued in 1820[1] does to all else he wrote. 'In Memoriam' and 'Maud' are poor poems, though they contain much exquisite poetry. Probably no modern work has done so much to undermine popular religion as 'In Memoriam.' Tennyson's best work, though in its way a miracle of grace and finish, is never of quite the highest kind. It is not finished *from within.* Compare the finish of 'Kubla Khan' with that of the 'Palace of Art.'"

"A. de Vere spent another evening here. He challenged me to a public defence of my thesis (which I learned from *you*) that there was little real feeling, much less passion, in Tennyson's poetry. We took 'In Memoriam' for our proofs, and, after examining one after one all his favourite pieces, he was forced to conclude that they each and all contained indications of consciousness, artifice, and other qualities inconsistent with the existence of any very lively flow of feeling at the time of writing."

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[1] Containing the Odes.

"I will let you have Tennyson's Play shortly. It is better than I expected—for it is not *weak*. But it is quite uninteresting. Every character is repulsive, and the sentimental themes, Mary's love for Philip and disappointment ment at not bringing him an heir, wholly unattractive. The moral is no better, simply the 'No popery' cry—the straw at which Lord John Russell's, Gladstone's and so many other drowning reputations have clutched in vain. I fancy it will not serve the Laureate's purpose any better than it has served Mr. Gladstone's. Surely there is no passion which, when indulged, becomes so strong and so vile as the love of popularity."

"I never saw any play nearly so dismal or ineffective as Queen Mary. Though it has only been out a week or two, the theatre was three parts empty, and what audience there was seemed to be of the most snuffy kind. So deadly stupid were they, that when Mary said 'We are Queen of England, sir, not Roman Emperor,' they did not catch the grossly obvious applicability of the sentence to what is now going on, until I began to clap and beat the floor with my stick ; then it dawned upon a few ; and at last about half the poor people caught the idea and clapped too ; and a gentleman behind me said to his ladies, 'That's because of the Royal Titles Bill.' I thought of Dr. Vaughan's experience —after going about the whole world—that the English ranked in stupidity next to the negroes."

"Mr. Gosse was complaining that Tennyson had charged him £150 for a song called 'The Throstle' printed in the 'New Review' while Mr. Gosse was editing it. C. P. replied that he thought it very poor pay for such a Poem, adding, he would not have written it himself for £300."

CHAPTER XIII

THE "CHILDREN'S GARLAND"

ABOUT 1861 Patmore was invited by Messrs. Macmillan to edit a selection of poems suitable to children. Emily Patmore, whose health, as has been stated, was then rapidly failing, and who for some time past had been compelled to confine herself to sedentary pursuits, was specially qualified by her admirable judgment of poetry, to which her husband repeatedly testifies, still more by her sympathetic insight into the thoughts and feelings of childhood, to assist him in his task. Patmore records in his diary:

"Our evenings together in the selections for the 'Children's Garland.' Her going to the Museum though she was so weak."

They together determined to put the selections to a practical test by reading poems to their children and judging the effect. The eldest daughter, Emily Honoria, then about eight years old, was the principal subject of the experiment. She was from the first a child of strong intelligence; was no doubt already sensitive to poetry, in which she subsequently showed by her letters and verses special power both critical and creative; and—this must have been of even greater value—she had an honest mind, and the habit of expressing her opinions with freedom and candour. Patmore, as is shown by his letters, regarded the two Emilies as partners in his work; and in writing to his daughter, speaks of the book as "your Garland."

The result of this practical test was, as Patmore

REV. [illegible]
ST. MARY'S [illegible] 1926

records in the Preface, to exclude "nearly all verse written expressly for children, and most of the poetry written about children for grown up people." He had the wisdom too to base the experiment on "liking" rather than "understanding." Even of adult readers the higher range of poetry does not always demand full comprehension as a condition of being enjoyed; and children are more readily contented to take much for granted as to sense, while they are often specially alive to the magic of suggestion and rhythm. Indeed, with some of the highest achievements of lyrical poetry—such for instance as "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"—young and old seem to be on a common level of full appreciation, based on a comprehension which neither is nor desires to be complete.

Woolner, who had already drawn a vignette for the "Golden Treasury," was commissioned to illustrate the title page. Patmore was delighted with his drawing, and, years afterwards, when an illustrated edition of the "Angel" was contemplated, endeavoured to press him into the service. This later scheme however was never carried out, and Woolner's drawing for the "Garland" is the only authorized illustration ever included in Patmore's published work.

Though the selection was made on these sound and sensible principles, it was not specially well received by the critics and the public. A letter of Emily Patmore's (printed above, p. 157), shows that she had endeavoured to ascertain what was thought about it, and had not received very satisfactory opinions from her friends. After her death it was very unfavourably reviewed in "Fraser" by "A. K. H. B." (Dr. Boyd) in an article which bears the following title: "Concerning Cutting and Carving, with some Thoughts of Tampering with the Coin of the Realm." (Fraser 67, 205, Feb. 1863). This article is interest-

ing to read for the curious revelation it gives of the critic's method. It is clear that when he first approached the book he was struck by various unexpected readings of poems with which he was acquainted through anthologies alone. Closer examination showed him that, in the majority of cases in which Patmore's reading differed from that with which he had been familiar, the anthologies were to blame. This naturally gave occasion for a diatribe against inaccuracy in transcription. Armed with this very recently acquired knowledge, the critic turns again to the "Garland" and succeeds in detecting some few actual defects in the versions which Patmore had given. This process is obvious to a careful reader of the critique; but the average reader is not careful; and by him the general condemnation of inaccuracy would be sure to be applied to Patmore, and an idea be left that the editor's work had been slurred throughout. The same impression would be fixed on a still larger number who would know no more than that the very invidious title of the essay was associated with Patmore's book. Whatever may have been the writer's intention, the result was eminently unfair; and Patmore, no doubt especially sensitive, on account of his recent bereavement, to an attack upon a work in which his wife had borne so large a part, felt and showed unusual resentment. Woolner, also a partner in the work as its illustrator, wrote a letter of sympathy, and being a friend of J. A. Froude, the editor of "Fraser," suggested an *amende* on the part of the magazine. Patmore's answer is as follows:

"British Museum,
"February 17, 1863.

"My Dear Woolner,

". . . The only effective answer to the Paper, it seems to me, would be one which could not be made in

"Fraser" at least; namely, an exposure of the trick by which the writer's "first impressions"—which he confesses to have been false—are made to be those which will be conveyed to almost every reader of the article.

". . . I do not pretend to have taken my copies always from the "Authors' Editions"; as that would have involved an amount of time and expense which would have made the work impossible.

"That it was done in most cases is admitted by A. K. H. B. himself, and this adherence, when practicable under the circumstances, to Authors' Editions, is the most that could be expected of the Editor of such a collection.

". . . I shall look however into these two points further, for my own satisfaction, but I remain of my former opinion, that I am not called upon to notice the attacks of a man who writes like A. K. H. B.

"Ever yours,
"COVENTRY PATMORE."

Woolner took the matter up warmly, and remonstrated with Froude on the injustice of the article. He writes, Feb. 19, 1863:

"It is clear that we have so impressed Froude with the blackguardism of that article that he is disposed to make gracious amends, and, as he is a most noble fellow, I am sure that doing so will be a delight to him."

The "gracious amends" were evidently meant to be a favourable review of Patmore's poems; and Woolner asks him to name some one who would execute this friendly task effectively. He writes:

"I should not ask either Palgrave or W. Rossetti; for, though they both admire your works, yet it is in a way different to the feeling that one entertains for Tennyson and the other for Browning; and, for an article to do much good in matters poetical, it must be writ by a real enthusiast, carefully guarding himself against any extravagance of praise. I fancy Garnett is something like the man, though I do not know his writings much: . . . Aubrey de Vere perhaps would be better."

Froude also seems to have written to Patmore to

the same effect. But Patmore declined in any way to instigate a favourable review or even to name a writer who could be trusted to do justice to his work. Froude writes to Patmore regretting that he will not fall in with his suggestion, and disclaiming responsibility, as editor, for A. K. H. B.'s article, on the ground that it is by a "known man" and duly accredited.

The following letter shows Woolner's deep sympathy with Patmore in this annoyance, and in the sorrow with which it was so closely associated.

"Welbeck St.,
"Feb. 23, 1863.

"My Dear Patmore,

"I read your letter to Froude, and thought it most satisfactory as a statement of your notion of the critic's cunning and of Froude's own courtesy. I sent it on to him.

"With regard to the subject of my last note, I fear that I did not make my meaning sufficiently clear: I did not wish you to attempt to influence Froude in any way: my suggestion was between you and me only, and I merely wanted you to name a writer who would do you justice, because I could not think of one myself; and after you had done this I meant on my own responsibility, without any reference to you, to have requested of Froude permission that such a paper might have been printed. I heartily agree with you that a man must live by his own law, but I do not think that this would have in any way infringed upon yours: you must remember that, however well disposed Froude may be to give you a good article, how is he to do so if he knows no man who can or will do it properly? It was to avoid this dilemma for him that I asked you to assist in naming a person.

"You think far too highly of any trifling service that I wish to render you, and are much too modest in thinking that you have no claims. To have lived a simple dignified life, thoroughly eschewing the gaudy vulgarities that delight so many; at great sacrifices to have steadily, through sharp difficulties, pursued one object that you thoroughly believed would benefit your fellow-creatures, and to have done this with infinite temptations for luring you into an

easier path resisted, seems to me to constitute very strong claims upon anyone who has been able to recognize the worth of such a life as yours. I can only hope that the unknown enemies who fill the press may have their minds changed, and not bespatter your idea so thickly with mud that the public cannot see what it is and how it is fashioned.

"I do not marvel at the thought which haunts your life. Though the same vivid happiness that you have known you can hardly know again, the present natural gloom will give way to something far different and better. I have seen, after some almost painfully magnificent sunset, a passage of darkness followed by light transcendently tender; and it has seemed that the pathetic beauty I saw there hanging over the mysterious earth came on me with even a dearer sympathy, gave my spirit a sense of deeper rest, and more spoke to me hints of immortality than when I had gazed upon its fullest glory; and, although my spirit may have been overcast with mournfulness, yet the pathos held within itself something more sacred and sweeter than joy. So that in my vision I see you, far years to come, amid a rich harvest from your labours, and beholding your children flourishing like young vines around you. I write in tropes and images, but you will know my meaning, so you must cheer up and not—or try not to—think too much of what drags with such strong temptation. I most deeply and warmly sympathize with all your trials and grief, and trust that time will deal gently with you.

"Ever yours truly,

"THOS. WOOLNER."

Notwithstanding this and other attacks in the press, the "Children's Garland" made its way steadily with the public. It became and continues popular with children, and has proved to many an excellent initiation in poetic study. At a much later date it might have had a more extensive circulation, had Patmore been willing to make one small change. In 1882, the School Board for London selected the "Garland" as a suitable prize for children on the condition that one poem, "The Outlandish Knight,"

was omitted. This ballad was objected to (not, as I think, wholly without reason), as being unsuitable to childhood. Patmore was asked by the publishers to substitute for it another of equal length. He however, considering that Messrs. Macmillan had already had too good a bargain with the publication, wrote them the following letter:

"Hastings,
"July 24th, 1882.

"MESSRS. MACMILLAN AND CO.,
"Gentlemen,

"As my time is fully occupied, and as it would take a good deal of research to alter a selection which was made with great care; and as, moreover, I have had no interest in the book since the sale of the third thousand, I can neither make the suggested change myself, nor consent that it should be made by anyone else.

"I am, Gentlemen,
"Yours faithfully,
"COVENTRY PATMORE."

The "Garland" therefore is still published in its original form.

The only other literary work on which Patmore seems to have been engaged at this period was to edit, in conjunction with Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Taylor, a selection from Mr. Aubrey de Vere's poems. This was issued in 1864 under the title, "The Infant Bridal and other poems." Mr. de Vere writes of it:

"I had myself no part in it except that of giving a very grateful consent to the undertaking. The selection was wholly theirs, and a better one could not have been made from my poems at that time published. I feel very grateful to the two poets who had thus given so much of their valuable time to the illustration of my poetry, thus giving it the best chance of success which it could have had."

The following letter refers to this joint compila-

tion, and is of some literary interest, as it gives Patmore's views on punctuation.

"14, Percy St., Bedford Square,
"Feb. 13, 1864.

"My Dear Mr. Taylor,

"As I leave England in the beginning of the week, I have directed the rest of the proofs to be sent to you alone. I will mention that almost the only point, hitherto, in which your most careful revision has not anticipated my corrections is one, perhaps, in which we differ on principle. Dashes (——) are absolutely necessary in dramatic verse, and when dialogues are introduced into other forms of poetry; but I have the strongest repugnance to them in lyrical and narrative verse, and have proved my fidelity to this principle by not admitting more than two or three (I think) in all the verse I have ever written. My notion is that absolutely perfect language ought to be able to do without any punctuation, which is only a concession made to that *difficulty* which it is the glory of the poet to overcome. Now the *dash* is an immense addition to this unmetrical looseness of language, and a poet who uses it often (which Mr. A. de Vere does not) seems to me to be burning his gunpowder in a saucer instead of in the barrel of a well-bonded verse.

"I think I mentioned this to Mr. A. de Vere, and he agreed with me. I have therefore ventured to put out the —— when its effect could be got as well, or nearly as well, by stops. This liberty however I have only ventured to take in some few cases in addition to those in which you have made the same correction.

"Yours sincerely,
"Coventry Patmore."

Of Patmore's life during the eighteen months which elapsed between his wife's death and the journey to Rome made early in 1864, there is not much else to record. He gave up the cottage at Hampstead at which she died, and returned to the rooms in Percy Street, within easy reach of the Museum, where they had lived during the greater

part of her last illness. The children were sent to a school at Finchley, where Patmore visited them almost daily. He was able too to receive his second son Tennyson, who was at the Blue-coat school, for holidays. The letters to his eldest daughter (printed in vol. ii.) throw some light on his manner of life at this period.

Not long after his wife's death, Patmore took his daughter Emily to visit William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet. Patmore had always been a warm admirer of Barnes's poems, had reviewed them frequently, and done much to establish them in popular favour. A friendship between the two poets had been formed by correspondence, and Barnes had pressed Patmore to visit him during his wife's lifetime; but he had been unable to leave her in her precarious state of health. Shortly afterwards he, with the same daughter, paid a visit to Mr. and Mrs. James Marshall, at Headingley, near Leeds, where he left Emily to continue the visit. She then joined her younger sisters at their school.

In February 1864 Patmore started for Rome. His journey thither and his impressions of the city are fully described in the letters which he wrote to Mrs. Jackson, and these are further supplemented by others addressed to Dr. Garnett (see vol. ii.).

Mrs. Jackson, as has already been indicated, was an intimate friend of the Patmores. It was to her house that the children were taken when their mother's death was imminent: she had been unwearied in showing him sympathy in his bereavement; and he started on his holiday under promise to write to her frequently, a promise which he fully redeemed.

This expedition, undertaken with no further motive than his need of change and his wish to rejoin his friend Aubrey de Vere, resulted in his conversion

to the Roman Church and his marriage to Miss Byles. In my sketch of her which follows I give a fuller account of both these events; but I may here introduce Mr. de Vere's account of Patmore's state of feeling when they met in Rome. He writes:

"Not very long after this signal success (that of the 'Angel'), the great sorrow of his life fell upon Patmore in the death of his wife. She was a woman of a strong nature, great beauty, and high abilities, and had met bravely all the difficulties connected with a small income, assisting him as few could have done by her energy and her cheerfulness. He in his turn ministered to her during the whole of a long and hopeless illness, with a devotedness which shrank from no toil.

"When all was over, his grief was in proportion to his love, and seemed to increase every day. I was then in Rome; and he came thither later; but Rome, at least through material glories and classic recollections, did little to assuage his grief."

Mr. de Vere gives further evidence of the depth of Patmore's sorrow for his wife, and concludes:

"It was during this visit that Patmore became a Catholic; but the subject had been in his thoughts for several years."

Patmore's conversion occurred almost simultaneously with his engagement to the lady who became his second wife. The relation which the one event bore to the other is more fully set forth in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV

MARY PATMORE

MARIANNE CAROLINE BYLES, born June 23, 1822, was the second daughter of James Byles, of Bowden Hall, Gloucestershire, and of Judith his wife. Mr. Byles, a cousin of Mr. Justice Byles, and a serjeant-at-law, died when his daughter was thirteen. His widow went to reside at Lavington in Sussex, occupying the house of Bishop Wilberforce. A niece of hers, Miss Emma Eisdell, who was considerably older than the daughter, came to live with Mrs. Byles and to take charge of the young girl's education. At Lavington they made the acquaintance of Archdeacon (afterwards Cardinal) Manning, who was then Vicar of Lavington-with-Graffham. He soon came to take a special interest in Miss Byles, giving her instruction in matters both spiritual and secular, among others in drawing. He obtained great influence over her: they became much attached to each other, and it was thought by her friends that, had he continued in the Anglican Communion, she would have become his second wife. Any such prospect was of course brought to an end when Manning took orders in the Roman Catholic Church; nor is it likely that it will ever now be known whether any actual engagement had been formed, nor how far her friends' anticipation of the marriage was justified. Certain it is that their intimate friendship and his religious influence over her were maintained till her death; equally certain, as

MARIANNE CAROLINE PATMORE.

From pencil drawing by J. Brett, R.A., 1871.

is shown by letters which Patmore wrote to the Cardinal, that he had during her life been ignorant of every rumour of the kind.

Miss Byles continued in the Anglican Church for two years after Manning's secession, when, after a severe and painful struggle, she determined to follow him, and was received into the Communion by Father Brownhill, S. J., the same priest who had performed the office for him. Her conversion proved, as she had anticipated, a heavy blow to her mother, who, nevertheless, as her daughter always gratefully acknowledged, showed no diminution of love for her, and made every arrangement, at whatever sacrifice to herself, that would enable her daughter to fulfil the duties of her religion. Mary Patmore used however to tell, with a sense of resentment not unrelieved by humour, of certain slights which she had undergone at the hands of others of less tolerant disposition,—how for example an Anglican clergyman, calling on her mother, had refused to notice her at all, until, on leaving, he asked her "when she might be expected to turn Mohammedan?"

After her mother's death she and her cousin, Miss Eisdell, lived together, and spent much of their time in Continental travel. They were in Rome in 1864, when Patmore, who already contemplated joining the Roman Catholic Church, arrived there, and soon made their acquaintance. He has recorded in his religious autobiography (vol. ii.) the impression made on him by Miss Byles, his proposal to her, the difficulty which seemed likely to prevent the marriage, and how it was removed. It is however fair to him and to her to record that his conversion, all but accomplished when they first met, was not directly due to any project of marriage, though personal attraction may have done something towards precipitating the change. He writes, "I had never before beheld so

beautiful a personality,[1] and this beauty seemed to be the pure effluence of Catholic Sanctity." She was indeed the first to whom he announced his reception into the Roman Catholic Church.

Still less was his proposal influenced by any idea of pecuniary advantage. Patmore had assumed that, of the two ladies who kept house together, the elder was the possessor of the wealth, and the younger a more or less impecunious companion. (This impression was such as the quality of generous self-effacement, manifest to all who knew her, would almost inevitably produce.) Indeed the knowledge which had to be imparted to him later, that she possessed a considerable fortune, came as an unwelcome revelation, and almost led to a breach of the engagement. On first learning this, Patmore quitted Rome in some distress, but was persuaded by friends whom they had in common to condone the embarrassing condition.

As soon as the arrangements for the marriage were definitely fixed, Miss Byles urged Patmore to return to England and prepare his children for the approaching change. She appears to have welcomed the idea of taking charge of his six children, and to have resolved from the first to be a true mother to them.

During the separation which ensued, she wrote him long letters, telling him how the news of her betrothal had been received by her friends; how Cardinal Manning had felt some disappointment at the sacrifice of her "vocation" (she seems to have

[1] Lest this should to any readers seem to be somewhat unfair to Emily Augusta Patmore, it should be noted that it is characteristic of Patmore, in his liberal use of superlatives, to express by them enthusiasm rather than comparison. The phrase may be taken in this sense here, and a similar interpretation should be given to many other passages where such encomiums occur.

contemplated taking the veil), but had been reconciled to the change by recognizing the "high character" of her future husband; how some friends had welcomed the idea of children coming under her charge, and others had considered the burden likely to prove heavy for her; but how all foresaw her happiness in the union. It was at this time too that she first made acquaintance with Patmore's poetry. She writes to him her comments on it:

"It makes me laugh aloud when I think of my sitting down to mark the lines I wish you would make higher in your 'Angel,' hoping that you, by implication, would take in how much I thought of all the rest—how perfect in its way it seems to be. For one thing, you have that very unusual gift, which I *admire* so, of saying so much in a few words. Then you strike off the very peculiarity of the thing you touch, like your 'languid' little chestnut leaves; then you catch *the* effect among all others a certain thing should produce, as when

'A blinding flash
And close, coinstantaneous crash
Humbled the Soul.'[1]

Then, if I may venture to say so, you touch the most delicate subjects with a purity which leaves scarcely a word to make a child's innocence wonder.

"A woman reading it would feel flattered; then, at times, provoked; for it is a shame for you to have been initiated into a thing or two quite solely feminine."

In one of her last letters before their marriage she writes:

"I know that I cannot be the wife to you and the mother to her darlings that she was; but, God helping me, you shall have my whole devotion, and may He [make good] my incapacity."

The marriage, after being postponed for a short period, which she required for making full disposition

[1] Quoted from "A thunder shower," "Tamerton Church Tower." The passage is introduced again in "Victories of Love."

of her property (she wisely judged that this should be done beforehand), was celebrated by Cardinal Manning on July 18th 1864 at the Church of St. Mary of the Angels, Bayswater; and, after a short interval, she embarked on her new duties as stepmother with a steady determination to replace for the children the mother they had lost, and to follow in the fullest detail the instructions which she had left. These duties were fulfilled by her to the end of her life, none the less devotedly because by character and by education she was less obviously fitted for the position than many might have been. By nature she was exceptionally reserved, having at command no such ease or readiness of manner as prove, at any rate in the first approach, specially attractive to young people. Moreover, having been herself practically an only child, tended with over-anxious care by her mother and cousin, she came to her new duties with a nervous sense of responsibility, with ideas too which were in some degree old-fashioned —conditions that must have made her position onerous to her and possibly somewhat trying to her young charges. Still, her complete and unselfish devotion could not long remain unappreciated; and in spite of occasional jars, which to her sensitive nature were almost crushing, she soon won her way with the children, and had her full reward in their deep affection.

The same reserve doubtless impeded the renewal of Patmore's former friendships and the formation of new ones. The change of creed certainly gave offence to some: the second marriage was, to those who had known and appreciated Emily Patmore, a still greater obstacle. With such friends Mary Patmore must have started at a disadvantage; nor was she qualified by manner to overcome prejudice. It was only those who had special opportunities of understanding

her, or were able to see below the surface, who could appreciate her really noble character. Her reserve was however for the most part insuperable, and proved, as I believe, a far greater burden to her than even to those who were most discouraged by it. She seemed to feel special gratitude to friends who could break through the barrier, and, I have no doubt, welcomed the tone adopted by Bryan Waller Procter ("Barry Cornwall"), who, with the privilege of age, wrote her "flirtatious" letters, specimens of which, a few out of many, are printed below. One or two very much younger friends, who succeeded in establishing with her relations of playful intimacy, were among her special favourites. But whenever circumstances put it within her power to give sympathy or help to those who were in sorrow or sickness, the wealth of her nature was revealed, flowing, as it seemed, in richer abundance for the habitual restraint. She might be compared to one who, possessing large means and equal generosity, fails to carry with him small coin, and can respond only to the more serious calls on his good-will.

As I recall her, Mary Patmore, though she had regular features and a good figure, could scarcely be called beautiful. Her manner and movements nevertheless gave an impression of mild stateliness and not ungraceful dignity, as well as of perfect refinement. She was a good musician, and played the piano with taste and execution, though no less averse to display in this than in other matters. She had received a good literary education, and her standard of taste was independent and high. The more domestic side of her training was less complete, and it is related that Patmore, soon after their marriage, was seen teaching her to darn, an accomplishment which he had learnt from his grandmother in boyhood. Being exceedingly nervous, she was in

constant fear of the big dogs which Patmore loved to have about. If she were joining the children in a walk, they would say, "We must chain up the dogs. Mama is coming out." She was always diffident and moderate in her remarks, but seemed to me, though gently deprecating, keenly to enjoy her husband's forcible statements, eccentricities, and paradoxical originality, in which indeed I frequently suspected that he indulged the more freely in anticipation of her mild and but half serious protests. The superficial contrast between the two was extreme, but served mainly, as I think, to give zest to their deep sympathy in matters of greater import.

As the family grew older, some settling elsewhere, and those who remained at home becoming less dependent on her, she reverted to her former intention, and, so far as circumstances allowed, laid out her life as a "religious" might do, assigning regular hours to prayer, contemplation, and good works. She did not however cease to take a deep interest in politics, and on occasions exerted herself actively in the cause of Conservatism. She also wrote a work on the "Rosary," and shortly before her death, commenced a translation of "St. Bernard on the Love of God," which was afterwards completed and published by her husband.[1]

It is difficult to estimate precisely the extent and nature of her influence on Patmore's thought and writing. Her seniority in the Church would, at least for a time, have given her a special hold upon his opinions on ecclesiastical matters, and she was able to instruct him in ceremonial observances of which he had little previous knowledge; nor had he much aptitude for them. Certainly her wish must have been to keep his work at the highest level of orthodoxy and of spiritual intensity. In a letter to him

[1] Kegan Paul and Co., 1881.

she speaks of "The Wedding Sermon" as "not so high in some parts as St. Thomas à Kempis, than whom nobody ought to be lower, to my thinking." Nevertheless it was not till quite late in her life that she obtained any genuine insight into the spiritual meaning of the "Odes." In Church matters, though by nature thoroughly large-minded and liberal, she was, probably owing to Cardinal Manning's direction, more "Ultramontane" than Patmore naturally was, or than later he showed himself to be. I remember for instance that he, during her lifetime, appeared to share her support of the "Temporal power," which in later years he ceased to advocate. The differences however both of temperament and of opinion in religious questions were slight. She enjoyed her husband's full confidence in such matters, especially those of the deepest import, and he thoroughly appreciated and relied on her saintly character.

She died suddenly on April 12, 1880..

Memorials of her are strangely sparse. There are a few letters to the children which they have preserved, concerned almost exclusively with motherly advice, with news of their pets, and such other matters as are of interest to the young. A diary too is preserved, in which she has recorded her rules and resolutions for self-discipline and conduct.

The following letter from her husband shows how fidelity to the dead wife was accommodated with the new relation, and tallies precisely with the thought embodied in the Ode "Tired Memory."

"Calverly Hotel, Tunbridge Wells,
"Feb. 6th, [1867].

"DEAR WIFE,

"Here is a snowdrop from the garden where I walked and sat, two years and a half ago, with my bride of a day.

"I know your dear heart would glow with pleasure if you

could see how mine has glowed with the thought of the happiness I have had and have in you. I asked last night, of *Her*[1] by whose intercession I think it was that I obtained you (and you know it was the *first* prayer I ever offered to her) that *two* loves and *two* possessions might survive death, and not in any way contradict each other. Why not?

"Believe me, I could not love you more had I never loved another. My dear, I may say

> "I could not love thee, dear, so *much*,
> Loved I not 'Honor'[2] more.

"C. P."

The following extracts are made from letters of Mary Patmore's, written about the death of a friend of hers to one who had been a closer friend even than the writer. The person to whom the letters are addressed thinks it fair to have it recorded that neither the lady nor the child who had died before her were Roman Catholics. The letters are valuable, not merely as illustrating the writer's character, but as showing how doctrines which are, in their crude, dogmatic form, abhorrent to many, are, by those initiated into the higher sphere of thought, both spiritualized and brought into harmony with the best feelings and hopes of humanity.

Much of the thought contained in them is likely to remind the reader of Newman's "Dream of Gerontius." I think that the letters will bear the comparison, as they make up in tenderness what is lost by absence of poetical expression.

I have little doubt that much of Mary Patmore's correspondence was of similar quality, but the extraordinary self-effacement and reticence which was characteristic of her in life seems fated to attend her memory, and these are the only letters of the kind which I have been able to obtain.

[1] The Blessed Virgin Mary.

[2] Honoria, the heroine of "The Angel," as identified with his wife Emily.

"What a bleak and dreary day for you to take your leave of her—laying her beside her darling . . . I think the most eager gush of tender feeling I ever felt from her was when she found that my whole soul and faith shrunk from the hard way in which another had treated her joyful hope and trust . . . . They little know.

* * * * *

"I shall never hear all I wish. It is one of the many things we have to bear that the curtain falls just at the moment when to one's love the interest is highest. Henceforth one knows nothing except that—God is Love—and that a spirit so loving—all love—brightly, ardently, tenderly loving, like hers who will never rejoin us again, must be gathered to Him—must always have been an object of his delight.

* * * * *

"What a sad, disappointed, uncompleted life for a spirit so enthusiastic. People are very dreadful in these days, and seem to me to believe and disbelieve in the strangest capricious manner—therefore I do not know at all how you think. *My* whole soul is with the faith that at that beautiful bedside whence the soul you loved went away, it went to a tenderer love than any mortal love can be—was judged by love, was found full of love, was excused any and all defects for the love's sake that would have made them all up, *had it known*, was passed on with reassuring reviving love to a place in the realm of love where it is safe, with the consciousness of everlasting safety, after a sight of the Eternal Beauty looking on her in love which makes the present time an eager prayer to be made fit to comprehend the joy of which she had a taste, an eager craving for the purification and enlightenment which shall enable her to enjoy as the perfected Blessed do. For who can suppose themselves at their going out from this world capable of enjoying the bliss of heaven? It is enough and supreme felicity, if when we die we can get smiled on by God: that once secured, all is safe—all is happy. Perhaps at first in a very imperfect, suffering way; but who could not cry 'More, more!' for everything which was the way to the enjoyment of that Love and Beauty, too little cared for perhaps on earth, which, at the moment when death seemed to bring the extreme humiliation, shone forth upon the soul

you wept for and revealed what, if we could imagine now, we could not fail to live for.

"The excessive longing to be fitted to enjoy must amount to suffering—but suffering so to be envied. No tongue can tell how full of joy, of peace, of hope, of rapturous remembrance, [was] that moment of delight when we thought all was darkness, but when the first glimpse and taste were given of the Beauty, Love and Bliss which are now certain and coming nearer and growing sweeter for all Eternity.

"And who can imagine the longing for all she loves to share the same and be for ever safe. How sure her prayers for all she loved: how she will press them for her beloved on earth whose blank and desolation she well knows, and whose love she can now requite—and all whose wants and cares she knows.

"I do not know how I have ventured to write all this to you . . . partly I have had to write in haste, and what would come was what my heart was full of—partly I have had to think much of heavy sorrows lately, very hopeless, and it was a relief to dwell on the thought of the present and the future of one whose love seemed to be the whole of her, and what more akin to heaven?

* * * * *

"As I go over in heart the little I know of the last days and weeks, I feel how wild must have been the burst of hope, the possibility of life and all it wanted, and how desperate the crush of all ending so wofully.

"And none can bring any healing—there is not, that I know of, a word of comfort. All one can offer is to feel with and to pray for such a sorrow.

* * * * *

"Still with God there is soothing and courage and the gift of the Paraclete.

Consolator optime,
Dulcis hospes animæ,
Dulce refrigerium.

In labore requies,
In æstu temperies,
In fletu solatium.

O Lux beatissima,
Reple cordis intima
Tuorum fidelium.

* * * * *

"Some day you will talk to me as you say, and tho' you will find me a dumb listener you will feel sure that I am not an insensible one."

The following are some of Mr. Procter's letters to her.

"Wednesday, Oct. 23, [1865].

"DEAR MRS. PATMORE,

"Many thanks for your kind vinous message. On the 21st of next month (November) I shall be 78, if I live till that day, and should you in the superabundance of your kindness send me *two* bottles—observe 2 *only*, I will drink your health in a glass of Madeira. Perhaps—if your husband is in the woods—you will send me a bit of your heart also. (I enclose you a large piece of mine.) I can scarcely write, my dear Mrs. Patmore, although I feel impelled to say more than your husband might approve. (But he is in the woods and we will forget him.)

"Although I flash about like a dashing young octogenarian, I am (in prose reality) but a poor old creature, who am now preparing to taste a little opiate to allay the pain that encounters me almost every day. With a hundred kind wishes, pray believe me now and at all times,

"Your very sincere
"B. W. PROCTER."

"32, Weymouth Street,
"Nov. 23, 1868.

"MY DEAR PATMORIA,

"Many thanks for your kind letter and little liquid present. I would address you as M.C. but I do not know what M.C. means—I have thought over every name and now can come to only one conclusion, that it must be "My Charmer" (Mr. Patmore is in the woods).

Sincerely I am grateful for your remembering me. Yes, on Sunday I entered my 80th year. I can't speak, or write, or walk, or eat, but I can love the dear M.C. still. Shall I ever see you again? I hope so, and that you will not go among the winged sister-angels yet. My dear Mrs. Patmore I often think of you, and I am always

"Your very sincere
"B. W. PROCTER."

"32, Weymouth Street,
"Wednesday Morning (I believe).

"My dear Mrs. Patmore,

"Although I am ill—I have been in my bedroom for the last fortnight—I am glad to hear that you meditate Xmas pleasure. For me—I cough all night and cannot eat or drink or be merry. I have tried all things—I at last have thought of the mill where old scarecrows such as I are ground into juvenile powder. Will you have me, *then?* Let me know when and where you are, in London I mean. Give my kind regards to your husband. He is, I feel, very happy with youth and health and children and the Hamadryads, but chiefly with somebody whom I will barely hint at.

"My dear Mrs. Patmore, when you go to sleep to-night, think that I am now as always,

"Your very sincere
"B. W. Procter."

"32, Weymouth Street,
"Saturday, Sept. 23, 1871.

"My dear Mrs. Patmore,

"All (and many) thanks to you for the Honey. Sweets *from* the Sweet are always very welcome. I wish I could send *you* some honey—even some sweet verses, but I am old and good for nothing—I can scarcely write, and speaking is a thing quite beyond me. They send me out with a nurse. I have come from the Park with just intellect enough left to read your letter (as Patmore is by you I must not say your dear letter). In return I send you a thousand kind words and wishes. Pray accept them. Although they are not worth the postage. Therefore I pay it.

"I hope you and all you care about are well and happy. I am dreadfully old, incapable as you see even to thank you for your kindness and goodness. I go on not quite foolish (as that word is now used), but utterly unable to say or to write half what I wish. If I live till the 21st of November I shall be 84!!! Pray think of me now and then, and pray believe I always think of you.

"Your very sincere (and affectionate)
"B. W. Procter."

CHAPTER XV

THE POET AS MAN OF BUSINESS

FOR some time after his second marriage Patmore retained his rooms in Percy Street, near the British Museum, his wife and children settling at Epsom until a house could be found for the whole party. As this dual arrangement proved inconvenient, he took lodgings at Hampstead, where they could all be together, and not much later they moved to Bowden Lodge, Highgate. Patmore had always had a preference for the northern suburbs of London, and his earlier correspondence mentions a variety of places, all in the same region: Kentish Town, Finchley, Hendon, Fortis Green, Hampstead, had each, for longer or shorter periods during his first wife's lifetime, provided a home for the family. It was his intention to settle permanently at Highgate, which was both healthy and sufficiently near to his work and to his London friends.

The younger members of his family retain pleasant recollections of this home. Their father, who had always loved to have animal life about him, was now better able to indulge his taste, and at once set up an aviary of rare and beautiful birds. It was a delight to the children to see him, on his return from London, produce a bag from which some new specimen would flutter into the cage.

The collection soon came to contain some sixty birds, which somehow managed to live together on fairly amicable terms. He took also to keeping large

dogs, for which he had always had a fancy. These cost him considerably more than their food; for on one occasion one of them actually caused some trifling injury to a child, for which Patmore gave compensation: from that time stories of the ferocity of his dogs were constantly reported to him, and any poor neighbour in want of half-a-crown found an easy means of obtaining it. His children remember too a little dormouse which made its home in the inkstand on his study table. It used, they say, to sip the ink, which, as the little animal lived for many years, may be assumed to have agreed with it. It would run about his writing-table and sit for hours on the glasses of his candlesticks watching him at his work. His next change of residence gave him the opportunity of indulging his love for animals on a more extensive scale.

In 1866, as I have already stated (p. 75), the weakness of the lung which had long troubled him became more threatening, and obliged him to give up his Museum work and live in the country. He was not long in finding an estate, or rather two contiguous estates, in Sussex, his favourite county.

The property contained nearly four hundred acres, and was divided by the high road into almost equal parts. It is situated about four miles from Uckfield, on the borders of Ashdown Forest and a short distance from Crowborough, a hill once covered with timber which is said to have been used up for smelting purposes. On each portion of the estate was a residence, the one a Tudor manor-house, the other a farm-house of Georgian date, to which had been added a new stuccoed front containing the best rooms. The Tudor dwelling was occupied by the farmer, whom Patmore did not wish to disturb. He therefore determined to make the more modern building his abode, to use the land attached to it as

pleasure-grounds and home farm, and to leave the other portion for the occupant to manage as tenant. The land with which Patmore had to deal is of great natural beauty, which however had never been turned to full account. The house stood at some distance from and slightly above a depression which carried a small trickle of water, while at the lower end of the ground was a long wooded dell with about half a mile of trout-stream at the bottom. The house, though it possessed in the older parts some attractive features, was hampered by outbuildings, which were objectionable on sanitary as well as on æsthetic grounds. A pile of badly-built stabling choked the principal front, and the old farm-buildings were placed close behind the house, which the farmyard actually adjoined.

Patmore's purchase had therefore brought him face to face with a fairly complex practical task, and gave him an opportunity of showing whether the poet and mystic could so deal with a landed estate as to justify the phrenologist's assertion (see p. 43) that he possessed the business faculty no less than the poetic.

The problem before him was to make his house healthy, habitable, and architecturally pleasing; to convert the land adjoining it from its aspect of a somewhat neglected farm into the suitable setting of a gentleman's residence; to master all the details of agricultural management, game-preserving, and the duties of a landlord; and to do all this with extreme economy, so that each step taken might enhance the value of the estate by more than the expenditure.

A full account of his proceedings is given in a little book which he published in 1886 called "How I Managed and Improved my Estate," to which the reader is referred for a fuller account than I can compass here. I shall content myself by recording

briefly some of the more important features of his scheme.

The first matter with which Patmore had to deal was the improvement of the house. It was essential that the stables and farm buildings should be removed to a greater distance; nor was it possible for him, with his cultivated taste for architecture, to rest content with the jerry-built stucco structure which dominated and partly concealed the older and more attractive portion of the house. He determined therefore to remodel and enlarge this later addition, and asked Mr. Bentley, who, as he characteristically remarked, was "the only architect who knew more of architecture than I did myself," to furnish a design for a new front. The style adopted was the later Gothic, with some leaning towards a French type in the detail; the character is broad, simple, and somewhat ascetic. The work was at once put in hand at an estimated expenditure of some £750. Patmore had never been made to realize that the rebuilding of the front involved a new roof and much remodelling of the interior, and this supplementary work raised the necessary expenditure to over £3,000. This would have run to a much larger figure but for his personal enterprise. The first method which occurred to him for reducing the expense was to raise the stone upon the spot. I may give here his own account of his essay in quarrying:

"The house stood upon a rock, and the farm-yard close by was entirely paved with the smooth living rock; but all experts, quarrymen and others, assured me that stone fit for fine masonwork was never found near the surface. . . . Having always, however, been suspicious of experts, I resolved to try. The experiment would cost about £10, and if it succeeded it might save me a thousand.

"Accordingly I had two square shafts, each about four feet deep, and large enough to admit a man sitting with his

stone-saw, sunk in the solid rock, leaving between them a clear block of about three or four feet wide and six apart. The stone-sawyer, sitting in one hole with room for the end of his saw in the other, sawed down the sides of the great mass between the shafts : the block was then loosened by wedges from its bed, and brought up to the top with much difficulty and labour, by the insertion of wedge upon wedge, and wooden block upon wooden block, each insertion raising the stone perhaps half an inch at a time.

"After about a fortnight's work the great block stood clear out. Its bare sides, almost polished by the saw, did not show a single flaw or 'bed'; the experts pronounced it the finest stone that had been seen in that part of Sussex; and that they did not exaggerate much, was afterwards proved by the fact that, as long as my quarry was open, the stone was bought, at almost any price I chose to name, by builders of mansions and church and school restorers for many miles round. . . . When my house, terraces, &c., were finished and I filled up the quarry, the masons and quarrymen talked as if I were closing a gold mine; but there was no help for it, for the yawning gulf lay just under the walls of the building."

Of scarcely less importance in the pursuit of economy was the personal supervision which Patmore exercised over the work in progress and his determination to break through the various trade conventions which tend to increase expenditure. He relates many instances of profitable interference with the routine of building—how, for example, finding that the workmen were taking down the farm-buildings brick by brick, he with his own hands levered down masses of wall with a crowbar, a method on which he subsequently insisted, and which effected very considerable economy; how he frequently detected waste of time in other particulars and generally secured that full value should be given for that for which he paid. He seems also to have obtained these advantages without causing friction or resentment on the part of those employed, who appear

to have appreciated the justice of his comments, to have caught his enthusiasm, and to have served him loyally.

The following letter to his wife gives an instance of one such interference :

"Wednesday.

"It has been a sad day for work, dear, but a good deal of demolition and a little edification have been got through. I have been out in the rain all day, and have used up three hats, and as many coats and boots, in my endeavour to keep the men to their work.

"I had one bit of good luck—I had been complaining to Bannister of the idleness—especially of the labourers, but his answer of course was that each bricklayer's labourer did enough if he made mortar and carried it and the bricks to the bricklayer. Immediately after this I caught a *third* labourer bringing mortar to the two bricklayers of whose labour I had been complaining. So here was a fine and unanswerably legitimate opportunity for administering a blow. I asked labourer No. 3 in the hearing of the bricklayers and their labourers Nos. 1 and 2, if he belonged to either of the brick-layers he was bringing mortar to. 'No.' So I ordered him to go immediately on other work, remembering that it was clear his services were not wanted, as I had seen the other two standing a few minutes before with their hands in their pockets.

"This evidently produced a sensation, and Mr. B., to whom labourer No. 3 went and reported my order, instead of sulking, as I thought he would, was decidedly more civil than before.

"Two new 'Wallers' have come on to-day, so one faintly hopes that more may be done. But I have a suspicion that the workmen have agreed among themselves that the job shall last till Xmas, and that addition of labour really is 'division' of labour.

"I have caught no cold though I have had plenty of chances.

"*Progress.* A course all but one stone added to the chimney. A mullion and a half worked for the new gable. A sill set, taken out again because it was not straight. A neat little deal box nearly finished for Mr. B's Sunday hat. . . . Yours, C.P."

HERON'S GHYLL.

To face p. 228.

The result was that he obtained a very attractive though simple and even ascetic residence at considerably less cost than might have been anticipated.

The house was completed in 1868. The family, which had been scattered while the work was in progress, was brought together in the new home, and Patmore was able to transfer all his energy and ingenuity to the development of the grounds. His scheme for these can be described only in general terms.

The depression in front of the house suggested a series of large fish-ponds connected by waterfalls. Patmore made accurate calculations for the transfer of the soil, so that a balance might be established between the banks and the hollows. He invented too a new and more economical method of "puddling," by horse instead of by manual labour. By employing a small staff of men under his own supervision he kept the expenditure within very modest limits.

He also turned his attention to forestry, a science on the mastery of which the value of a Sussex estate largely turns. Large quantities of timber and scrub had to be removed to clear the house from obstruction and to open out the best views, and a considerable portion of the land had to be planted, on scientific principles, with fresh timber. Shrubs too were needed in proximity to the house, and Patmore states that he spent on them as much as £180 in a single year.

These operations, together with minor but necessary details—making or widening drives, cutting paths through the copses, building summer-houses, cottages, and an aviary, the management of the home-farm, game-preserving and the checkmating of poachers, occupied his thoughts and time for some years. To every portion he gave the fullest attention

and brought to bear on it all the practical ability he possessed. To the success of his scheme on the æsthetic side I can bear personal testimony : Heron's Ghyll as I knew it in the early seventies was certainly one of the most charming places I have seen ; none the less so for being unpretentious and of almost ascetic simplicity ; while on the financial side the achievement proved ultimately no less conspicuous.

Besides the little book I have mentioned, Patmore's letters of this period give many details of the life he led while superintending the work. He was out of doors all day in all weathers, often working with his own hands, throwing down walls, knee-deep in the mud of the lakes he was forming, soaked with the rain, plastered with the soil, or covered with the dust of demolition—a strange life for a poet with more than a suspicion of lung weakness. Nevertheless he seems to have gained by this experience not merely in health but in mental power. The following letter to his wife, written when the more important part of his work was approaching completion, gives evidence that both climate and occupation had proved beneficial to him.

"Tuesday Night, Buxted Farm.

"DEAREST,

"I do think we shall be very happy here. Every thing is so calm and 'slow' and suited to my rest-loving mind. The climate too seems unlike any I have yet known for my health. The air is so pure and thin that my brain is still in a state of pleasant intoxication with it, and no exposure—even without exercise—to damp and cold, shows the slightest tendency to bring back the hitching in my throat, which has completely left me. If only we can get the Church question settled comfortably, I do not see a single thing to interrupt our pleasure in our new possession.

"You will be surprised at the effect of my alterations in the grounds—even in the very unfinished state you will see

them in. Constable seems to think I work by a fairy's wand. Wood's foreman is always here, but every idea is mine, and it is lucky I remained, for his ideas would not have pleased you so well, I think.

"Good-bye dear,

"C. P."

The "Church question" was this: the Patmores were bound to hear Mass on Sundays and on the greater festivals. The nearest church was at Lewes, twelve miles away: the only other within reach was at Tunbridge Wells, two miles further still. Patmore applied to Rome, asking leave to have a private chapel in his house and a resident chaplain. The Pope granted a license for daily Mass and the still greater privilege of permission to retain the Blessed Sacrament—on condition that on Sundays and festivals the chapel should be thrown open to the public, and that on certain days the family should attend their parish church at Lewes.

One of the new rooms of the house had been expressly designed for a chapel and merely required fittings: the difficulty of obtaining a suitable chaplain was considerable. The post of private chaplain is, I believe, held in small favour by Roman Catholic priests, and in the present instance there was no society in the neighbourhood to attract, nor were the duties required such as to provide sufficient occupation: so none offered but aged invalids. One of these was in constant need of nursing, and often proved unequal to the little duty that was required of him.

Patmore had many stories to tell of the eccentricities of his chaplains; how they would ask him for his oldest wine and specify other creature comforts they required, without shame or compunction. Before long this arrangement became intolerable: so their house was served by a priest from Lewes;

or they would entertain as a guest one whose work lay in some large town, and who required rest and change of air.

As I have said, the house was extremely simple in character and depended for its charm on good material and proportion,—on solidity, and refinement of detail. The only feature I can recall which was a distinct luxury was the stained glass which Patmore had placed in the upper lights of the large bay window in the drawing-room. The subject was characteristic of him and of his works: there were represented in medallions the "seven heroines of poetry," Eve, Helen, Dido, Kriemhild, Guinevere, Laura, and Beatrice. Eve occupied the centre light, and one of the heads, I forget which, was a portrait of his daughter Emily.

Patmore's study was pleasantly placed at an angle of the new house, but scarcely gave him the seclusion which he needed for his work and rumination. The house proved somewhat conductive of sound, and the babble of the offices could not be excluded. He therefore built himself a hermitage in a wood at some distance from the house—a timber structure, thickly thatched, lined throughout with varnished match-boarding, and fitted with a grate which would hold the liberal fire of logs which he loved. Of this he jealously kept the key, and allowed no servant to enter it; nor was it swept by any hands but his own, unless, as a rare privilege, he allowed his eldest daughter now and then to be his housemaid. His family and visitors were however occasionally admitted to tea there by special invitation. Later he introduced bedding for use in times of pressure, and would tantalize his guests with offers to let them spend the night in this romantic solitude.

Mrs. Garnett, who was a frequent visitor, supplies the following story:

THE HERMITAGE, HERON'S GHYLL.

From a sketch by B. Patmore.

To face p. 232.

"I well remember a picturesque summer-house at Heron's Ghyll in which we young people often passed happy hours. In it was a certain luxurious couch, the cushions of which were embroidered by the ladies of the family. An ample fireplace, fashioned to burn large logs of wood, was in rather dangerous proximity. I once coaxed C. P. to allow me to sleep one night there all by myself for the romance of the thing. He at once consented, and I was enchanted by my success in coaxing the owner of that delicious little house; but in a moment he drew me aside, and in low, mysterious tones remarked, 'Perhaps I ought to tell you that a certain iron box under the couch contains a quarter of a ton of gunpowder.'"

The only further addition to the place was a gateway tower, built to adjoin the house and increase its accommodation by some half dozen rooms. This was not however projected until Patmore had come to realise that Heron's Ghyll had grown into a home beyond his means, though for a wealthy owner it needed enlargement. Soon after the completion of this final work he let the estate (1874), and subsequently sold it to the Duke of Norfolk.

The financial result, as given at the commencement of "How I Improved my Estate," is as follows. The original cost of the estate was £14,000, and Patmore spent £5,500 in improvements. He sold timber to the amount of £1,000, and during his fifteen years of occupation obtained, by farming much of his own land, considerably larger returns than could have been got from rent. He finally sold the property for £27,000. The net profit he reckons at £9,500. The above figures, however, work out at £8,500, £1,000 less than this. To account for the discrepancy it may be supposed either that he brought the £1,000 into profit as the usufruct of the land over and above the probable rental, or that his characteristic optimism landed him

in an error of this amount. In any case the transaction gives good evidence of his business capacity.[1]

Before finally quitting Heron's Ghyll, Patmore set up a memorial stone on which was chiselled, "Ora pro C. P. qui ordinavit."

[1] Patmore was probably right in thinking that he would have got £2,000 more for the estate had he sold it two years earlier, before agricultural depression set in.

CHAPTER XVI

COUNTRY LIFE

FOR a full year and more Patmore's work on the house and grounds had proved an engrossing occupation, and had left him little time for enjoyment or for assimilating the phase of life which lay before him. As his employment slackened he had increased opportunities of appreciating his surroundings and of entering upon the duties and pastimes they offered. He had never since boyhood lived for long out of London or its suburbs, and many features of country life came home to him almost with the charm of novelty. It was a delight to him to observe not merely the processes of nature in the garden, fields, and woods, but also the various operations of agriculture on his land. The following letter to his wife shows what fascination these had for him, and is evidently the basis of a passage in his ode "L'Allegro," which describes better than any other the life on which he was now embarked:

"Yesterday I had my last harvest thrashed out. We thrashed 170 sacks in about twelve hours. I think, that when we have got used to the steam-engine we shall not think it unpoetical. I am sure Goethe would have made a splendid passage out of the *rapidity* with which the hopes of the long year are 'realized:' the grain pouring from the many mouths of the machine all at once, the numbers of men feeding the furnace, oiling the engine, tying up the sacks as they fill, building up the mountainous stacks of

straw, the sacks accumulating in the barn, etc. It is a very invigorating sight and I wish that you were there to see it."

As too the estate was large enough for game, and the stream held, as Sussex streams usually do, a number of good-sized trout, he was encouraged to initiate himself in the mysteries of sport. I doubt if he had much previous training in shooting or fishing, nor do I know to what proficiency he attained. He used certainly to get a fair basket of trout from the little stream, and he did not altogether fail as a shot, though his ambition was modest. Of his driving I shall have a story or two to tell later. Such occupations were the more necessary to him as there was little society in the immediate neighbourhood. His great friends, Dr. and Mrs. Jackson, who had settled at Saxonbury, Frant, were some fifteen miles away: the present Mrs. Patmore's family, the Robsons, lived at Lewes, scarcely less distant. The only friend he had within easy reach was Dr. Prince, who had erected an observatory on Crowborough Hill, and whom he often visited, especially if anything unusual was to be seen with the telescope. (A letter recording one such visit is given in vol. ii., c. vii.). But, notwithstanding the distance, he frequently went to see his friends at Frant, and was often at Lewes, where the Robsons' house was open to him when he had to attend his parish church.

It was however the society of his own class only that was remote, and he had plenty of human interest at his doors in the tenants, labourers and others who were connected with the estate. By way of drawing them together, and of showing that Roman Catholics were not necessarily out of sympathy with popular customs, he, as soon as the principal work in his house was finished and before the quarry

was closed, inaugurated, on the 5th of November, a grand celebration, which was to rival that at Lewes. The quarry provided an excellent site for the bonfire: the children were set to dress an enormous Guy: Patmore brought his old knowledge of chemistry to bear on the fireworks, which he made himself, and which proved very successful. One of the gardeners, who was told off to assist in the cremation of the effigy, was heard to say: "What, burn him? Why, I thought they worshipped him!" All the families on the estate were invited to see the show, and were regaled with cake and whisky. Their numbers were found to have increased prodigiously for the occasion.

He was naturally observant, and his poorer neighbours were studied by him for purposes both humorous and practical. He records, for example, how the little daughter of one of his servants, whom he had suspected of poaching, saw some pheasants in the larder, and exclaimed, "Oh, what pretty pigeons;" and, on being told that they were not pigeons, she replied, that she was quite sure they were, because her father had told her they were pigeons. Also he relates that he would receive offers from intending tenants, prepared to give more than a reasonable rent, for land in the immediate neighbourhood of his covers; no doubt because they anticipated a more valuable harvest from the woods than from the fields. Indeed the poaching fraternity seem to have taken a thoroughly business-like view of their occupation, and, when caught and sentenced, admitted that the penalty was reasonable, and that they had had more than full value for it in pheasants. Patmore developed in those days a strong game-preserving instinct. He tells how, hearing in the middle of the night the sound of gunshots in his covers, he sallied out fearlessly with a pair of horse pistols, failing to

realize till later how great a risk he had been running: he was surprised also at the strength of the impulse which had led him into danger. It was, I think, partly the desire to protect his game more effectively, partly the wish to surmount any disability which might attach to him as a Roman Catholic, which made him move his influential friends to get him placed on the Commission of the Peace, an appointment which he sought, again unsuccessfully, while at Hastings.

I have shown in a former chapter (p. 160) that the conditions which with Patmore had proved most conducive to poetic impulse were present whenever he experienced a rebound of health after the depression of illness. These, with others of no less importance, attended the life he was now leading. His health had, as I have said, greatly profited by the new surroundings; nor was it from mere illness that he was recovering, but from the deepest sorrow of his life. He had also for the first time been able to concentrate his mind on pursuits which were absolutely unconnected with his former employments. While engrossed with the improvement of his estate he was unconsciously preparing the mental soil for a new harvest of poetry. If the ground was not lying fallow it was at least benefiting by "rotation of crops." Patmore has written that "no amount of idleness is inexcusable in a poet." Apparently the *strenua inertia* of his country occupations was even more advantageous to him than perfect leisure.

The first sign of the returning impulse was an exhilaration which showed itself in various ways. Those who were with him at the time of which I am speaking say that he was often "as merry as a schoolboy." He loved to take his friends drives in the beautiful country, often into remote parts. On one such drive the party was overtaken by a ter-

rific thunderstorm. They found themselves further from home than from Mayfield, and thither Patmore drove through the pelting hail to obtain quarters at the little country inn and dry clothing at the Convent. His spirits always rose with any paroxysm of nature, and the following morning saw him so elated that nothing would satisfy him but to return by way of Saxonbury, a *détour* of many miles, that he might relate the adventure to his friend Mrs. Jackson.

A sure symptom of Patmore's exhilaration was a love of teasing, which often took the form of raising the expectations of his victims and disappointing them at the last moment. Mrs. Garnett, who had herself been subjected to an experience of this kind, as related in the last chapter, gives me the following story :

"C. P., his two daughters, a lady friend, and myself journeyed to Brighton to spend the day. It was a very cold one in mid-winter: we were shivering in a keen north-easter; and the prospect of a warm room and luncheon had been uppermost in our minds for some time. Mr. P. spoke of a certain well-known restaurant, and painted in glowing terms a dish for which the restaurant was famous, hashed venison. We all took our seats: the waiter advanced expectant of orders for five guests. 'Waiter,' said C. P., 'this lady (pointing to me) and I will have a dish of venison—*very* hot if you please. But, waiter, it is Friday. The other ladies fast.'"

Another story, which Patmore used often to tell, is in somewhat similar vein, and shows too that he had no Puritanical scruples as to the subject of his *jeux d'esprit*.

He was walking one day in the woods with a clever and very vivacious French lady who frequently visited him. They came upon a dormouse which

ate a wild strawberry out of his hand. He thereupon improvised the following :

"When the first dormouse saw Adam and Eve eating the apple, he said to himself, 'I should like a bit of that!' but he hid his eyes with his tail, lest he should be exposed to temptation, and for that reason was exempted from the wildness which fell upon all other animals."

The lady was a friend of M. Louis Veuillot, editor of "l'Univers," the organ of the extreme Ultramontanes. She thought very highly of M. Veuillot, an opinion which Patmore failed to share. There had been discussions between her and Patmore as to his merits, during one of which the lady had exclaimed, "Ah, monsieur, c'est le meilleur homme du monde." "Pardon, madame," answered Patmore, "c'est le meilleur homme de l'univers." The lady was much delighted with Patmore's story of the dormouse of Eden, and at once communicated it to her friend M. Veuillot. A fortnight afterwards there appeared in "l'Univers" an account, two columns long, of this "beautiful English Catholic tradition."

But high spirits were not the only symptom of the return of poetic impulse. Absence of mind began to show itself in certain ways. Patmore had always seemed to me to be a somewhat inattentive if not careless driver; but, if it were a guest who was his companion, he was sufficiently alert for practical purposes: if it were his wife or daughters who were with him, he would become completely absorbed. His horse was not remiss in taking advantage of his pre-occupation, and would often lapse into a walk without disturbing his driver's *rêverie*. On one occasion Patmore was taking his wife for a drive : they went on and on into unfamiliar regions : evening began to fall: Patmore showed no sign of turning, and was evidently quite self-absorbed,

unconscious of his position, of the growing darkness, of all but his own thoughts. Mrs. Patmore tried in vain to rouse him. She spoke to him: he did not answer; shook him, with as little result; then, as a last resource, she took the reins and stopped the horse. This brought her husband to his bearings, and he found himself in a region quite unknown to him, and almost in darkness. Presently a rustic came on the scene, and Patmore asked him the way to Heron's Ghyll. The answer was, "I don't rightly know; but if you go on as you're going, you'll be *drownded*." Some time later Patmore succeeded in finding the spot where they had been lost, and saw a deep pond but a few yards beyond the point at which his wife had stopped the horse.

The habit of inattentive driving was not confined to periods of poetic incubation, but became permanent. When his youngest son was about four years old he said to his mother on returning from a *tête-à-tête* drive with his father, "Mama, Piphie would rather not be a poet when he's a man." Mrs. Patmore asked him "Why not?" The child answered, "Because poets take so long to drive to Winchelsea."

I have not succeeded in finding any evidence as to the time when the actual composition of the earlier Odes began. The first instalment was privately printed in 1868, and, as for a considerable time between 1866 and 1868 Patmore had been engrossed with his estate, I conclude that he had written these nine Odes with great rapidity. His composition was indeed always rapid when the impulse was strong.

Though it belongs to a somewhat later period, I may give here a story of self-absorption resulting in a fine passage.

Patmore was walking with his daughter, Gertrude, on the Common near Tunbridge Wells, and had for

a long time been silent and absorbed, when he suddenly asked her if she had a piece of paper with her. She had none, but gave him her linen cuff. He wrote on it, and on his return to the house, having copied from it, gave her back the cuff, on which she found the following lines—lines which must have been constantly present to the minds of those who know the Odes, during the last few months, when most days have brought news of the heroic deaths of our soldiers :

> " The sunshine dreaming upon Salmon's height
> Is not so sweet and white
> As the most heretofore sin-spotted soul
> That darts to its delight
> Straight from the absolution of a faithful fight."

CHAPTER XVII

THE ODES

IF there are no records of the time when Patmore first began to write the Odes, neither are there any to explain how and from what motives he came to adopt the metrical form in which they are cast. In later years he always spoke of their metre as "catalectic," a definition which, seeing that he brought all, even blank, verse under the law of "catalexis," does not throw much light upon the subject. The new metrical system seems to be founded on no theoretic principle, nor can it be explained by analysis. Neither length of line nor incidence of rhyme are subject to any formal law: both depend upon the ear alone. What Horace said incorrectly of Pindar may be accepted as true of Patmore: "Numeris fertur lege solutis."

Early in 1868 he had written nine Odes, which, in the April of that year, he printed for private circulation.[1]

In the preface to the volume he says:

"I meant to have extended and developed this series of Odes until they formed an integral work expressing an idea which I have long had at heart; but feelings which

[1] These Odes had no titles as they first appeared. They may be identified in the later publications under the following titles: I. Prophets who cannot Sing. II. Felicia (called in later editions "Beata"). III. Tired Memory. IV. Faint yet Pursuing. V. Pain. VI. The Two Deserts. VII. Deliciæ Sapientiæ de Amore. VIII. Dead Language. IX. 1867.

are partly conveyed by the concluding piece have discouraged me from fulfilling my intention, and I now print these fragments of the proposed poem for private distribution among the few persons who are likely to care for them as they stand."

The "concluding piece" is that called in the later editions "1867." After expressing a pessimistic view of the condition of England in matters political and social, of which D'Israeli's Reform Bill was both symptom and cause, it ends with these lines:

> "Hush'd be all song,
> And let Christ's own look through
> The darkness, suddenly increased,
> To the grey secret lingering in the East."

These Odes were all republished in later editions, for the most part with little alteration. One of them, that called later "Tired Memory," which is biographically the most interesting of all, was considerably modified, mainly by the omission of the last twenty-three lines.

Though Patmore sent this group of Odes to such friends only as he thought likely to appreciate them, their reception was not encouraging. Few estimated them at their proper value, and the acknowledgments he received were for the most part forced and perfunctory. This, though disappointing, should scarcely have surprised him. To readers of his earlier work the appeal must have seemed altogether new both in form and subject. Those who had cared for the "Angel" even with intelligent insight must have been at a loss to connect it with the new poems, and slow to discern the essential identity of subject when presented under so different an aspect; and the very originality of the work must have proved a barrier to immediate and general recogni-

tion. Patmore has himself recorded how slowly he had come to see Tennyson's merits, and might therefore have allowed for a tardy appreciation of his own. He was however keenly mortified; and when the book had been less than two years in print, he made a fire in the hall and cast on it (as he thought) all the copies remaining on his hands, while he calmly sat and watched them burn. A friend who had heard of the intended bonfire persuaded his daughter Emily to abstract a copy or two, and these, with the few which had been sent to friends, were all that remained of the edition. Copies of it are now of considerable value.

I may record here another similar cremation made from altogether different motives. Patmore was always scrupulously anxious that his published work should be in full accordance with the doctrines of the Church which he had joined. In 1873, nine years after his conversion, he began to feel doubtful whether his earlier work was altogether free from error, and, in order to be on the safe side, determined to destroy all remaining copies of the "Angel." These were in the hands of Messrs. Macmillan, who also had the right of publication. Patmore arranged with the publishers for a surrender of their rights and of the stock in hand, for which he paid them £50: all the remaining copies were sent to Heron's Ghyll and formed the material of a second bonfire. Later he came to realize that the sacrifice had been unnecessary. In 1886 he states (vol. ii., c. iv.) that "he had not one word to alter in order to bring the 'Angel' into harmony with Catholic truth and feeling." In the same year he writes, in a poem called "A Retrospect":

> "I, trusting that the truly sweet
> Would still be sweetly found the true

Sang, darkling, taught by heavenly heat,
Songs which were wiser than I knew."

Also in the "Child's Purchase" he writes:

"And crowns the few [*sc.* days], which thou wilt not dispraise,
When clear my songs of Lady's graces rang,
And little guess'd I 't was of thee I sang."

Patmore indeed came to consider the "Angel" as evidence that he had been practically a "Catholic" long before his actual conversion, a view which seems tenable only on the assumption that Roman Catholicism holds a monopoly of purity, chivalry, and ideality in the treatment of love. These qualities however are no doubt the main connecting link between the earlier and later work.

Seven years after the issue of the nine odes, Patmore published in "The Pall Mall Gazette," then edited by Mr. Greenwood, ten poems, eight of them odes and two from the privately printed edition. Among the number was "The Toys," which became the most popular of his later poems.[1] They were

[1] Appended is a list of the poems which Patmore printed in "The Pall Mall Gazette" and in "The Week," with dates:

PRINTED IN "THE PALL MALL GAZETTE":

March 8, 1875, "How it Seems to an English Catholic." Signed C. P., afterwards published as "The Standards."

Jany. 18 /76, "Peace,"	signed	C. P.
July 6 /76, "The Rosy Bosom'd Hours,"	,,	C. P.
Nov. 3 /76, "Let Be,"	,,	C. P.
Nov. 7 /76, "A Farewell,"	,,	C. P.
Nov. 14 /76, "If I were Dead,"	,,	C. P.
Nov. 22 /76, "The Two Deserts,"	,,	C. P.
Nov. 30 /76, "The Toys,"	,,	C. P.
Dec. 20 /76, "Prophets who cannot Sing,"	,,	C. P.
Aug. 20 /77, "The Girl of All Periods,"	,,	C. P.

PRINTED IN "THE WEEK":

Jany. 5 /78, "Arbor Vitæ,"	,,	C. P.

signed "C. P.," and, though they attracted a good deal of attention, their authorship was recognised by few beyond the circle of the poet's intimates. It is said indeed that a *poeta minimissimus*, who bore the same initials, was anxious to disclaim connection with them.

In 1877 Patmore published a collection of Odes under the title "The Unknown Eros," and a second series followed in 1878 which included "Amelia," an idyll or narrative love-poem in the metre of the Odes, thus forming a link between these and the "Angel."

These poems, though their circulation has never been and probably never will be very extensive, have already done much to raise Patmore's reputation. They were welcomed by many who remained blind to the depth of thought and to the literary skill which had been shown in the more simple and domestic poems of the earlier cycle. Patmore indeed was inclined to resent the strong preference which the critics proclaimed for the later work, which he attributes (see p. 161) to the change of form. He did however admit that the Odes were his best poems, an opinion which readers may endorse without depreciating the earlier work.

Undoubtedly Patmore has, in the Odes, penetrated nearer to the living heart of poetry. Some hint of the abstract and the ideal is essential to poetic effect, but may be revealed in various modes and degrees. In the Odes these elements are present in greater abundance and in closer condensation. Love, the main subject of all Patmore's verse, is no longer shown as love in earthly fruition, but is raised and etherealised, becoming more closely identified with Divine Love; and the change of subject corresponds with an increase of pregnancy in expression. Since he wrote the "Angel," Patmore's life had served

to deepen, widen, and intensify both thought and feeling; his ear too had gained in accuracy, and the new form of verse proved more forcible and more elastic, lending itself to the expression of more poignant emotion and to greater exaltation and complexity of thought. What he offered in the Odes approached more nearly to the quintessence of poetry, and for that very reason his "audience" was likely to be "fit though few." The appeal is now exclusively to genuine lovers of poetry as such; whereas the "Angel" won many readers amongst those who care for little more than the sentiment and the story. It is not every reader of verse who loves it for its poetic quality, and few can drink of the Pierian spring undiluted, or breathe the air of mountain summits. The higher and purer the strain, the smaller will be the number of those who have ears for it.

Patmore's position as a poet must be settled in the future, possibly in the remote future, but will, I believe, ultimately depend far more on the Odes than on the earlier poems, though these may continue to command the larger audience. But anticipations as to the judgment of posterity are hazardous. I may shift the burden of prophecy to the stronger shoulders of one who has in many ways helped to spread the sails of the poet's reputation, and who, as "The Looker-on," wrote as follows in "Blackwood's Magazine" (March, 1898):

"Why Patmore should have been so much neglected, and neglected most when the best of his work was coming from the press, is a wonder; but yet not very remarkable; for in every century almost every art adds to the number of such humiliating puzzles. Most of the greater poets of this century suffered by a blindness of judgment which nobody has been able to explain; and as long as it remains mysterious it is likely to remain uncured. Judging from

the past, the probability is that at this moment some considerable genius is scanned by hundreds of persons of fine taste with no clearer discernment of his worth than if they were mere 'ordinary readers.' But if so, the hapless man has this to his comfort, that it is usually the lasting genius which goes unrecognised at its first appearance. The applause that is instantly won is oftenest revised, reduced, or even silenced; that which is first bestowed by an after-generation, apparently no wiser, is seldom withdrawn by the succeeding age. Strange; but a blessed thought for the man who fades into the grey years with little praise, and but a small award of pudding, for what he knows to be good work."

The completion of the Odes practically ended Patmore's career as a poet. The very limited appreciation they received discouraged him, and he came to think that he had said all he had to say that could be expressed in verse. He had however occasionally an ambition to write more, as well as ideas of the form in which future verse might be cast. One of his projects was to write a long narrative poem in ode metre, like "Amelia" but on a much larger scale; the other was to select certain passages from the Odes which seemed rhythmically complete, suggesting a long and complex stanza, and to write a poem in stanzas thus formed.

Though he had never altogether accepted the sonnet as a serviceable form of verse, he was enthusiastic about such "great and gracious" stanzas as those of Spenser's "Epithalamium," and thought he could write happily in some such metre. Neither of these schemes was ever carried out.

Patmore's letters written between 1873 and 1878 to an intimate and sympathetic friend, throw much light upon the circumstances, physical and mental, under which the later Odes were written, and give evidence of the study which he devoted to his work, of the seriousness of his aims, of his theories and

purposes—in fact give a fair idea of the inner life of the poet while in the throes of composition. A very large proportion of them are concerned with the "Child's Purchase," a poem in honour of the Blessed Virgin, which is certainly the most ambitious if not the most perfect of his Odes. The dates of the extracts given are not always ascertainable, nor does much of their interest depend on chronology. I have arranged them in the order which seems to give the best picture of the poet's mental processes.

"If I live ten years more, and have health of mind and body, I shall probably write the poem you long for. It seems impossible—but that is no reason for not undertaking it. Most things that are worth doing seem impossible till they are done."

"I believe that no amount of idleness is wrong in a poet. Idleness is the growing time of his harvest—and the upcome of a year can be reaped in one fine day."

"I have no plans as yet, for none of my old ones seem wide enough; but I am preparing myself, by six or seven hours reading and thought every day, for *any* plans that may be presented to me. If I am to do any more work, it must be on some new level. The longer it is before the key-note of my new song is given to me, the sweeter perhaps it will be."

"Ruskin writes that 'no living human being' has ever done anything that has helped him so much as the Odes!! But I do not find myself much affected one way or another by these things. I know pretty well where my strength lies, and I know much better than anyone where it falls short—and the power is so transitory, so almost momentary, and so seldom comes, that the passing of the wind now fails to blow my self-conceit into a flame. It is not me: it is only a sudden flush, or rather flash, of spiritual health, exciting me to song by its uncommonness. Dr. Rouse told me of a book on the B. V. which I have since bought and find very useful. But how different must my book be, if ever it is to be. Shall I ever be able to condense that

"Let Be!"

Ah, yes: we know the good and evil trees
Dash'd with despondence ~~And often desperation~~ of her laugh so ~~[illegible]~~ sweet;
He fiercer fighting, in his worst defeat,
Than I or you,
That only courteous greet
Where he does hotly woo,
Did ever fight in our best victory?
~~[illegible]~~
Let be, let be!
Why should I clear myself, why answer thou for me?
That shaft of slander shot
Miss'd only the right blot
I see the shame
They cannot see:
'Tis very just they blame
The thing that's not.

Another is mistook
Thro' his deceitful likeness to his look!

Coventry Patmore

formless, unintelligible blaze of mystic doctrine into human words of 'honied peace' and beauty? I know not. At all events it seems right to prepare myself to the best of my power for the possible gale, which may come some day and may enable me to ride the waves of the glittering gulf. I have always found in writing anything of consequence, that the idea, when it has got into my mind, has to brood there for years, without making any seeming progress, but in reality ripening, until the impossibility becomes all of a sudden the easiest of things."

"I have just read the account of Sanazzaro.[1] I do not imagine, from the sketch given of his poem, that it is at all like what I have sometimes dreamt—sometimes still dream—that it would be possible to write. The more I look at the subject the more I see that it would be impossible to treat it directly without profanation. It may be *approached* from various directions—as in the 'Contract,' but it could not be directly handled, with any degree of fulness, without breaking in upon the Divine Silence which hangs over the subject like a speckless sky over a landscape. I hope you see my meaning and agree with me. Three or four more Odes like the 'Contract' and 'Deliciæ Sapientiæ' I think will include all that ought to be attempted: the Series to be concluded and crowned with a great ode 'To the only Woman.' The subject requires *quality* not quantity."

"I work steadily about eight hours a day in *preparation* for the still more unknown 'Eros,' and I think the day will probably come when I may feel fit to begin. But I shall not feel so until I have got upon a platform as much higher and brighter than that of 'Eros' as 'Eros' is higher and brighter than the 'Victories.' If ever I do write again, I believe it will be very fast; for I have got the use of words and the 'accomplishment of verse' pretty well in hand, and I shall soon have a large accumulation of new thought; so that, when the pulse of poetry begins to beat, the pen will run glibly."

"Thank you for your nice, long, encouraging letter. I had got so out of heart about every thing, that I was allow-

[1] "De partu Virginis."

ing the mood to extinguish itself, and the old weary feeling of a dull waiting for death to take possession of me again; and the oppression of that feeling on my chest was bringing back the bronchitis, which had curiously almost disappeared while I was breathing the pleasure of writing. But, as the last Ode I sent you pleased you so much, and as you urge me and inspirit me to 'buckle on my armour' . . . . I will try not to let the new inspiration die out."

"I have now read theology for four hours a day for five months, and am getting rather muzzy-pated with it. It is like living on brandy and soda-water; and, were it not that I occasionally peg into the roast beef of Shakespeare, I fancy I could scarcely survive it. However I have now nearly ended *that* part of my preparation for my work, and shall soon be endeavouring the actual composition, though I do not at all see my way as yet. Indeed, I see it less than I did; for this prodigious dose of divinity has made me feel half-chloroformed; *i.e.* in a decidedly anæsthetic state. A little wholesome dissipation will restore me to my senses I hope. For poetry, contrary to the usual notion, is almost the only species of writing which *cannot* be done when one is out of one's senses."

"Last week was rather hard fasting, and I got a little out of condition at the end of it, but I have been working steadily. I have written entirely four considerable Odes since you were here, and added very long and important passages to one or two others. I read them all over together this morning. They struck me as gaining immensely by their *cumulative* effect, and I think will on the whole make a volume of more consequence than the last. I began the volume last Easter. Would it not be fine if I got this one finished before the end of this Lent? It will certainly be the best year's work I ever did. And I do not see why I should not go on at about the present rate for some time to come. I have hit upon *the* finest metre that ever was invented, and on *the* finest mine of wholly unworked material that ever fell to the lot of an English poet."

"I do not perceive any likelihood of another fit of the versifying fever as yet. It is not right St. Valentine's weather. The warm winter has made Nature nerveless,

and there is no motion of the sap as yet in tree or man. The Blackbird, who by this time ought to sing, only talks, and all is still mere 'desolation' to any one with nerves in sympathy with Nature. I trust it will be better soon!"

"You will be glad to hear that without writing a line or even thinking of one, I have got a deal of insight into my future work. Even the great point—the form—flashed upon me as I was walking in the garden yesterday morning, as I was thinking of something quite different.

"I have been very well in health, though I have seldom been able to sleep more than three hours in the night. The mental work is so hard and constant, that, though it produces no excitement of any other kind, it leaves the brain at night in a state of vibration, slight but sufficient to spoil sleep."

"I quite forgot to give you all the copies of the new Odes to take away with you, that I might escape having them talked over. But I have managed to keep them hid away. You can't think how it annoys me to have to talk about my poems. All persons seem strangers to me directly they get on that subject, and I feel as if I was shewing love-letters to some chance comer. Women especially have so little sense of decency in introducing and discussing matters of feeling. They ask one, without the slightest sense of indecorum, if such and such a tender passage was based on personal experience, etc. etc., till one is heartily ashamed of ever having written a line."

"We are quite of one mind in hating everything 'abstract'—abstract virtue, abstract truth, and all other abstractions, which are the delight of philosophers, and, I believe, of devils. I am not sorry however to be alone again and at work on St. Thomas, whom I read daily for some hours—not only as the best possible preparation for my own writing, but as 'desiring the sincere milk of the Word that I may grow thereby'—of which 'sincere milk' the 'Summa' is a huge reservoir, though our modern wise men think it nothing but hair-splitting.

"I have serious thoughts of making an 'abstract' (a pin for the phrase) of certain parts of the 'Summa' for the use of such English readers as are hitherto in invincible

rather than malicious ignorance concerning Catholic Philosophy.

"The poetry is growing like the moonrise when the disk is still below the horizon. There is more and more light in that direction, but no shape of anything. Not to run before he is sent is the first duty of a poet, and that which all living poets—except Barnes—forget. If this duty is religiously kept, a very little running may make the successful race, when the moment for starting comes."

"I have been continually engaged in studying and meditating the proposed subject of my next poem. The idea has, from time to time, for years past, fixed my imagination; but it has always seemed too great, when really approached, for my powers. I have not as yet the least idea whether I shall ever write a line of it, beyond those two or three 'Odes' which are really part of it, and which were expressly written as part of it. I don't at all see at present how the subject is to be treated, but I have the great negative qualification of knowing exactly how it ought not to be treated. And this perhaps is as much knowledge as it is good for a poet to have before the actual commencement of his work. For the discovery of the mode of treating a subject is a great inspiration and delight, and ought to be co-instantaneous with the actual composition. So I shall go on hoping that after perhaps years of thinking and note-making, as was the case in the composition of the 'Angel,' in ripeness of time and knowledge a sudden illumination will come, and I shall write the whole poem off as easily as a letter, as I did the 'Angel.'"

"Did you get my book ('Amelia') in which a spring day is described? I think the volume looks very neat and quiet—like Amelia in a very plain morning dress, such as she might have chosen to help Mama make puddings in. The essay on Metre reads dreadfully learned. Do you understand it? I am by no means sure if I do."

"You will be glad to hear that I have really *begun* the great Ode, (the 'Child's Purchase') or rather the Ode on the great subject, and that I have written two or three considerable passages of it, not altogether to my dissatisfaction. *Begun* in such a case is more than half done, but

I am so anxious it should be as good as I can make it, that, feeling now pretty secure about a fair success, I have put it by for the present in order to go carefully again over all my sources of knowledge on the subject, so that no essential thought may be omitted. It is very difficult to *insert* an additional thought into an Ode when once it is fairly finished, because the music rolls in long undulating strains which would certainly suffer by the introduction of any after-thought.

"The Ode, though taking the form of a Prologue or Invocation for modesty's sake, will be self-contained and not really require anything further."

"Since I began work, just a month ago, I have written more than I did in the last fever, and that you know was a severe one. I have written eight new odes in that time. I have more and more hope that, if I have life and health for a few more years, I shall be able to write on my splendid subject with a beauty and freedom which I cannot foresee. Lights are constantly breaking in upon me and convincing me more and more that the singular luck has fallen to me of having to write, for the first time that anyone even attempted to do so with any fulness, on simply the greatest and most exquisite subject that ever poet touched since the beginning of the world."

"For the last ten days or so I have had a constant low headache, but have nevertheless been steadily at work, laying the foundation broad and deep of my *possible* poem. The more I consider the subject of the marriage of the Blessed Virgin the more clearly I see that it is the *one* absolutely lovely and perfect subject for poetry. Perfect humanity, verging upon, but never entering, the breathless region of Divinity, is the real subject of *all* true love-poetry; but in all love-poetry hitherto an 'ideal' and not a reality has been the subject, more or less. Here there can be no exaggeration, and yet all is quite simple, without strain. The whole difficulty of the subject will be in getting rid of the vulgar ideas of 'greatness' and seeing the matter in its essential smallness and homeliness and sweet warm-heartedness. But this is an enormous difficulty, and one which I don't see how I can get over. My comfort is that an apparently insuperable difficulty ahead is the best excite-

ment of the intellect that can be—as I know by experience, for I felt the same hopeful helplessness when I was preparing to write the 'Angel.'"

"I fear I have not much working time left, and I know I have much lost time to answer for and make up, if possible. In poetry, happily, it is possible to make up for lost time, for there is only a certain amount of original poetry to be got out of one's self, and this may be done in one's autumn, as well perhaps as in one's summer or spring. It is strange however how much more my nerves get *shattered* now by poetic composition than they used to do. Four or five Odes completely knock me up."

"This extraordinary relapse from spring into the worst of winter again, makes me very anxious to hear from you. Everyone (self included) have bad colds in this house, and how much worse is it likely to be in yours! If we could see our spiritual bodies which are within this 'mortal scab' I fancy we should find that all the beautiful white and rosy hues which had been brought out upon them by the exquisite spring days of a fortnight ago, have been turned black! I wonder if we shall bud and blossom again, or whether all this year's spiritual fruit is dead. It is a pity, if so, that we blossom so long before the peaches."

"I have been hard at work, since I saw you, but it is not work that shows. I have spent more time in getting three or four lines right than I did in writing the whole of 'Amelia'; but there is no help for it. Until I have made the thing the very best I can, it lies on my conscience like a sin. Your criticism on the commencement of 'St. Valentine's Day' has been most valuable to me. I have quite re-written the opening, in consequence of your remark about the fault of dwelling on the cold of February."

"I am wanting very much to hear something about the new Odes from you. You say very little, but that is good. I, too, think that my poetical powers are certainly not waning. I doubt, however, whether they are as mature as you think. I am sure that I am not yet up to writing the poem for which we both long so much. That requires

more than maturity in poetic skill. It requires a maturity of spiritual peace, to which I have not yet attained.

"By the way, do you never *write* any poetry now? You know how useful the very few verses you ever wrote were to me; and how I stole some of the finest lines in the 'Eros' from them."

"I have written to Dr. Rouse to offer to go to Lourdes with him and to pay his expenses. This visit to Lourdes I propose to dedicate to the interest of the Poem. Do you think I am very superstitious?"

"I can write very fast when I have anything to say—but I am a bad hand at the universal modern accomplishment of writing well with nothing to say. Cannot you suggest what the French call a 'motif' or two? Something that you yourself would like to write an ode about if you had leisure."

"Notwithstanding my weakness, I have had, these two last days, a feeling which, had I been six nightingales at once, might have flowed into song; but as I am only one Poet, it has stifled itself. *One* song, or a succession of songs, would not have expressed it; nothing but the mortal impossibility of simultaneous utterance of *many* songs in different directions, could have served. So I am silent."

"Have you had the proofs? If so how do they read? Do you like them as well as 'Eros'? I am very anxious to know, for, as usual, seeing the poems in print has entirely destroyed my own pleasure in them. All the meaning and beauty I fancied I saw in them seems to have vanished, and it requires a great exercise of faith not to conclude that, after all, I am nothing but a miserable self-deluded Poetaster."[1]

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[1] This may be compared with the following letter of Mrs. Barrett Browning's. ("Letters of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning," p. 44.) "For the rest there will necessarily be a reaction; and in my own particular case, whenever I see a poem of mine in print, or even smoothly transcribed, the reaction is most painful. The pleasure, the sense of power, without which I could not write a line, is gone in a moment; and nothing remains but disappointment and humiliation. I never wrote a poem

"'Amelia' is quite a new experiment. It is an Idyll in Ode metre. I think you will like the versification of 'Allegro.'"

"I have written as much in the last three weeks as the whole of the[1] nine Odes!"

"The beauty and incomparable variety of the metre opens up quite a new prospect to me of the possibilities of poetry. In the hands of a Goethe, for example, what might not be done with it. Fancy a drama full of power and tenderness in which the persons should speak their passions in that splendid and delicate torrent of music, instead of in stupid blank verse. But far be it from me to dream of such a work. I must content myself with 'brief swallow-flights of song.' I mean to call my collection of 'Odes' whenever it is finished, 'Religio Poetæ,' meaning that region of religion which is expressible in human language to the human heart. The Motto shall be 'Desire of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession,'[2] meaning that the much abused earth is the 'main region' of the Poet and not the inscrutable heavens, though, unless his eye be habitually turned to those heavens, the earth itself remains as inscrutable as themselves."

"Dr. Rouse has sent me another admirable Sermon on the subject. It is most curious how he is exactly the person to help me, and came to me immediately after I began asking for the 'best persons, events, &c.,' to prepare me for the work I have in hand."

"I know nothing of how 'Eros' is getting on, having had no reports of its sale and seen no reviews, except what you have seen. Indeed, I told Bell not to let me hear any thing about the matter, as it does not really concern me. My business is done; I have written the poems and sent them

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which you could not persuade me to tear to pieces, if you took me at the right moment. I have a *seasonable* humility, I do assure you."

[1] Those which were privately circulated in 1868.

[2] Neither of these ideas was carried out.

forth, and whether they make their effect now or by-and-by is really a matter of profound indifference to me."

"I sent you the new edition of the 'Angel' yesterday. If ever you read the poem again in this new edition you will find it much the brighter for the few seemingly trifling omissions and changes I have made. I consider now that I have done with my old poems for ever. They are as good now as I shall ever be able to make them. When the whole four volumes are out, I shall feel as if I had cleared off, for the first time, one main task of my life, and that the years to come are free for something unknown and altogether different: 'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'"

"H ——, who is one of the most sober, cultivated and severe of critics, says that '"The Unknown Eros" surpasses, in weight of matter and loftiness and perfection of style, all the poetry of the past generation, and is as secure as any book ever written of becoming a permanent British Classic.'

"If this or anything like this praise be true, it will be looked upon, in times to come, as a curious sign of the present condition of English criticism that, although the book has been before the public many years and has had a fairly large circulation, neither the 'Quarterly,' 'Edinburgh,' 'Times,' or 'Saturday Review' has ever noticed it, while shoals of poetical mediocrities have been lauded over and over again in their pages. The fact is that criticism, for the first time in the history of English literature, is wholly left in the hands of a little clique of superfine literary hacks, whose interest it is to ignore any work that rebukes their claim to be held as the leaders of literature. This now seems to be so generally felt by reading people that Kegan Paul and other publishers have told me that the criticisms of papers and reviews have scarcely any appreciable effect on the sale of a book."

"Mr. Hawthorne[1] came and smoked with me yesterday evening. You should have heard him talk about the Odes.

"He said the 'Angel' had always been a treasure to him,

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[1] Julian Hawthorne, who was at one time a neighbour of Patmore's at Hastings.

'but you have grown into a Titan since you wrote that. What was still better, you should have seen the delight on his face as I read him 'Amelia' and 'De Natura Deorum'; every word he seemed to see the full meaning of the first reading.

"'You must have been happy to have written that,' he said, when I had finished reading 'Amelia,' and I thought —I had!"

"Very few good poets have ever attempted to write religious poetry—knowing the almost insuperable difficulty. In the few who have attempted it, Nature and Humanity are withered up instead of being beatified and developed by the religious thought. The Incarnation, in fact, is still only a dogma. It has not got beyond mere thoughts. Perhaps it will take thousands of years to work itself into the feelings, as it must do before religion can become matter of poetry. You will smile at my attempting such a subject as the Marriage of the Blessed Virgin, holding as I do these views. I smile at myself at dreaming of such an impossibility. But impossibilities would never get done if no one attempted them, and the attempt usually brings a good reward, be the failure ever so great. But mind, I do not intend to fail, for I do not intend to attempt unless I see my way. What I am doing now is merely groping about to find if there lies any unsuspected pass between or over the seemingly insuperable heights. Such hidden ways often lurk in mountain lands. You seem to be travelling all day towards a dead upright cliff, and when you come to the foot of it you find a flowery pathway winding through the heart of it."

"Since I said good-bye to you on Saturday—*i.e.*, in three and a half days—I have finished the Great Ode of which you heard part, and have done two others, both fully up to the mark, and one eighty lines long. Also I have doubled in length the shorter Ode I think I read you, about the Tories and the Russian war. I won't send any of them to you, for I think you like them best when I read them. This start of work has warmed my brain so nicely that, if only I had any more good *subjects* at hand, I think I could go on at the same rate for some time longer. But I don't see my way to anything further. A good subject is a great and rare godsend. Nearly all subjects that are subjects at all

are *too* good. That is they are somewhat by themselves, and do not depend wholly on the treatment, as a good subject for an Ode must. There are two or three fine subjects looming in the distance, but I am not up to them yet—perhaps shall not be for years, if at all."

"Every one of my books—except the first little volume of rubbish, done to please my father—has been written after many years of reflection on its subject—reflection for my own benefit, not primarily with a view to the book, which has been merely the easy and rapid overflowing into words of the fulness of thought at last attained. Hence I trust that all I have written will be found by fit judges to be good sense—not necessarily common sense—clearly expressed (as far as the matter admitted of) because clearly apprehended."

"My best things were written most quickly. 'Amelia' took four days; 'Deliciæ Sapientiæ de Amore' two hours several of the best Odes even less. But I have often spent days and weeks in working up a short passage to the level of the best. The first Book of the 'Angel in the House' took only six weeks in the writing, though I had thought of little else for several years before."

"I am the only poet of this generation, except Barnes, who has steadily maintained a literary conscience. . . . . Though, of course, I may not be a competent judge of how good my best is, I am sure that I have given the world nothing but my best."

"The 'Odes' are evidently a dead language to J. B. He declared he could not catch a glimpse of meaning in many of the clearest of them. I foresee, from those violent, opposed opinions, that there will some day be great fighting over them amongst the critics. Sir Frederick Pollock and Mr. F. Locker acknowledge their copies, with the set remark that the *last* poem, 'The Rosy-Bosomed Hours,' is 'charming.'"

"A man who thinks he has got anything to say should always write for money. There is always some air of priggishness in one who 'gives his advice gratis.' Modesty is

preserved by the money-motive. Besides, the subtlest truths are like the remoter stars: you cannot see them unless you look a little on one side of them. You are likely to say your say the better for having your direct gaze fixed upon the five, ten, or twenty pound note which your prophecy is to bring you."

EMILY HONORIA PATMORE.

From a photograph by Rejlander, 1872.

To face p. 262.

CHAPTER XVIII

SISTER MARY CHRISTINA (EMILY HONORIA PATMORE)

I.

EMILY HONORIA, the eldest daughter and third child of Coventry and Emily Augusta Patmore, was born on June 2nd, 1853. She was a singularly beautiful infant. Her mother, writing to a friend, says: "Baby is as sweet as new virgin honey, and as good as she can be."

Patmore, in a letter to his wife (1855) who was away on a visit, says: "I never saw Baby looking so beautiful as she did yesterday evening. Such eyes! I declare I almost fell in love with them. Blue, square, and full of

> 'That strange look of baby state,
> Which sweetly waives its right to scorn';[1]

laughing, simple, and yet searching, celestially mature though earthily infantine. She shall never marry with my consent if she looks so handsome."

At a very early age she began to help in the household. When she was four and a half years old her mother writes about her:

"Emily begins to read and write. She is very gentle and amiable. I look forward to the happiness in her that you have found in ——. Even now she amuses Baby in a room alone every Monday morning for three hours while I

[1] An adaptation of a passage in "The Angel," Book II., iii. 2:

> "Her sometime look of girlish state
> Which sweetly waived its right to scorn."

teach Tennyson, and the servants are washing. She is of real use in this and many things."

In 1861 she writes again :

"Emily reads French books alone for amusement, and can translate Telemachus with looking out a word every six or seven lines. She also gets up every morning, takes a cold sponge bath, and dresses herself and Bertha; all before I am awake. She prepares alone, I never see when, a page of translation, a page of vocabulary, and writes an exercise. Is not that good for a child of eight years old?"

At the time that this letter was written her mother was compelled, on account of her now rapidly failing health, to live in London with her two elder daughters as companions, while Patmore divided his spare time between them and his other children at Hampstead. Emily always looked back upon this time of especially close companionship with her mother as the happiest of her early life.

Her father preserved certain stories about her childhood which point rather towards the extreme honesty which was one of her strongest characteristics, than to the imaginative power which she afterwards developed. Children are very apt, when a call is made on them by their elders, to conjecture what is expected of them and to respond accordingly. Emily, on the contrary, appears always to have spoken her genuine sentiments, however disenchanting they might prove.

The first of these is given as Mr. Aubrey de Vere has kindly communicated it to me.

"A wonderful night had come to them, a night rare in our misty climate; one of those which breed a confusion among the constellations, but which may have suggested to the poet of 'The Seasons' the line, 'Poured all the Arabian heaven upon their night.' It seemed as if some new and higher manifestation of divine glory were about to be vouchsafed to our earth. 'Our child must see it,'

the poet exclaimed; 'it is worth while breaking her sleep for it. She will never forget it. She will see in it even more than we do! We must wait patiently for her earliest word.' The Father snatched her from her small bed: the Mother wrapped the blanket carefully about her. They carried her into the garden. Slowly they drew the veil from her eyes. They stood in silence waiting for the oracular word. At last it came. It was this: 'Oh papa, how untidy the sky is!'"

Patmore used also to tell me how, remembering what emotion the first view of the sea had roused in him, he had waited to hear what Emily would say when it first dawned upon her. This happened on a stormy day, when the tide was low and the waves, breaking far out, churned a wide expanse of ocean into foam. On this occasion her remark was, "How soapy!"

The only other story about her childhood which I can remember him to have told, one which may be specially commended to the notice of Professor Sully, is as follows:

When one of his friends was riding her upon his knee with rather excessive vehemence, she exclaimed, "Please don't, you'll shake out all the sawdust."

She keenly felt the loss of her mother, who died when she was just nine years old, and retained a very distinct recollection of her, as is shown by the little memoir which she wrote many years later (see above, pp. 150-153). From this time her interest in her younger brothers and sisters and her influence with all greatly increased; in fact she became the "little mother," the spirit of the family, to whom both the elder and the younger children looked up with great reverence.

It is clear too, from Patmore's letters to her which are printed (in volume ii.), that there was between father and daughter an unusual degree of sympathy

and confidence. The daughter's letters of this period have not been preserved; but it is evident from her father's answers that she communicated to him everything that was of interest to her, even to the smallest details of her everyday life. She was also his companion in some visits which he paid to friends; first to William Barnes, the Dorsetshire poet, on which occasion, as may be gathered from the letters, her high spirits rather ran away with her; and later to Mr. and Mrs. James Marshall at Headingley, near Leeds, where she remained some months after her father had left. During this visit she sat to Miss Julia Marshall for the medallion which is given in vol. ii. (p. 123), and which Patmore repeatedly praised as an admirable likeness, an opinion which all who knew the daughter must endorse. From Headingley she returned to school, and a little later her father went to Rome, where he became engaged to his second wife.

She was the first to be introduced to her future stepmother, and though her love for her own mother was still intense, she not only cordially accepted the new relationship, but did everything in her power to induce her brothers and sisters to welcome it. This could not have been a very hard task, as, in spite of extreme reserve, the complete and unselfish devotion of the new mother could not long fail to be apparent to all.

Soon after the marriage she, with all the rest of the children, was received into the Roman Catholic Church, accepting the change of creed with the full conviction that it now had their own mother's sanction and sympathy.

While the transformation of Heron's Ghyll was in progress, she and her sister Gertrude were sent to a convent school in London for a year, where, under the supervision of the Abbess, a friend of their stepmother, they were so happy that they almost regretted

leaving it for the pretty house which had been prepared for them.

It is evident from Patmore's letters that about this time she suffered from shyness and self-consciousness. She took her father into full confidence about this failing, and received from him wise and fatherly advice which must have greatly helped her to check it. I doubt however if this defect was apparent to any but herself; at any rate it cannot have been so for long. To me and to others who knew her at this period her manner seemed perfectly frank, almost "downright." The impression I recall is that of maidenly pride quite unhampered by shyness, and of looks and ways expressive of exceptional straightforwardness, honesty, and candour. Shyness however often shows itself in indirect and unexpected ways; and it may be that the very downrightness of her manner was the result of such feeling and of the effort to subdue it. Probably the sensation of which she was undoubtedly conscious was largely due to a change which was taking place in her character and thought.

She was now often studying under her father's supervision, and was beginning to share those spiritual apprehensions which were so vital to him. Many of her verses, which show great similarity in thought to Patmore's later work, were written about this time. She became more thoughtful and more inclined to solitude. Instead of spending her leisure in devising plays, making marionettes, or painting scenes for miniature theatres to amuse her brothers and sisters, as she had formerly done, and for which diversions she had a special talent, she became more and more silent and self-absorbed. Her father and stepmother wisely considered this state of mind to be unwholesome for a girl of sixteen, and decided to send her to school, where she would have lively

companions of her own age. So in 1869 she was sent to a convent at St. Leonards-on-Sea to complete her education.

Her father's letters to her while she was there show a wise anxiety that she should throw herself completely into the life of the place, spend much of her time in the open air, and do plenty of practical work. On finally leaving school at eighteen she astonished her father by expressing a strong wish to return immediately to the convent she had just left, and there to become a nun. He, though desiring only her happiness, refused even to consider the proposal or to have it mentioned to him for at least two years: "when she had seen more of the world he would reconsider the matter, if she had not changed her mind in the meantime." Accordingly she was taken abroad, and afterwards introduced to social life in London. Such amusements however entirely failed to attract her, though she was grieved to find herself unable to enjoy the pleasures that had been provided for her. She assured a friend that the desire to be a nun had been a fixed idea with her since her seventh year, though at that time she scarcely knew what a nun was. If this be so, it must have been one of those intuitions to which her father did not hesitate to attach a special value.

On the Twelfth-night after her return from school some scenes from "Kenilworth" were acted for the amusement of the house-party, and were to be followed by dancing. A lady who had taken the part of Queen Elizabeth, as soon as the dancing had begun, went into the chapel, and found Emily already there, in her character-dress of Amy Robsart, prostrate before the altar, sobbing and praying to be allowed to get away to her beloved convent. Both the Queen Elizabeth and the Amy Robsart of that evening subsequently took the veil.

Finding that the desire for convent life was not diminished, and that the unsatisfied wish was beginning to tell upon her health and spirits, her father yielded before the expiration of the specified time and himself took her to the convent. She spent two years of her novitiate at the principal house of the Order, at Mayfield, which was within a drive of Heron's Ghyll. Here her relations often visited her, and witnessed with delight the full return of the old childlike simplicity and gaiety. After her profession, she was sent to teach in the school she had left as a pupil four years before. She had now full scope and encouragement for her literary talents, and used laughingly to say, "Now I find it very difficult to make verses to order." Here again she was soon within easy reach of her relations, who in 1875 removed to Hastings. It was at this time that she received copies of her father's Odes as he composed them, and wrote the letters given below, which show the deepest sympathy with his poetic work. Indeed so completely were their thoughts in unison, that, as one said who knew them both intimately, "it appeared as though they had one mind in two bodies."

It was evident to all who saw her in the new life that she had chosen the vocation which was most suited to her. Though by no means of robust health, she never sought any relaxation of the convent discipline. She became more and more of a "contemplative," and those who visited her noticed a constant increase of beauty corresponding to her spiritual growth. Mr. Ruskin, writing to her father in 1868, had spoken of "the quiet, intelligent sweetness of your daughter's face." A relative writes in her convent days that "at times her face shone with a splendour which can only be described by the words 'love visible.'" This expression had been used by the poet of Emily's mother, who represented for him

the ideal of conjugal love, and as such inspired "The Angel in the House." The daughter, though in no degree the motive of the Odes, seems to have corresponded scarcely less to the central idea of these later poems. It may, without indulgence of mere fancy, be noted that mother and daughter realized, each in her own life, the one the earlier, the other the later poetical ideal; while it is entirely consonant with Patmore's view that Love Divine should be the offspring of Love Human. It was his privilege to see in each the fulfilment of his highest conceptions, answering to the several periods and phases of his poetic impulse.

In the spring of 1882 Sister Mary Christina (Emily Patmore's name 'in religion') caught a chill which attacked the lungs. She seemed to rally, but failed to gain strength. After much pain, heroically and cheerfully borne, she passed away, longing "to be dissolved to be with Christ." Her father, for whom her love came little short of adoration, was with her to the last.

II.

The following verses are taken from a small notebook into which a number of poems, almost all religious, are transcribed in a girlish handwriting. I am certain that Patmore never mentioned them to me, and believe that they were never shown to him till long after Emily's death. To me the verses seem to be of high merit, not merely for spiritual fervour and intensity, but also for their perfect directness and *naïveté* of expression—a quality which, exceptionally rare in modern writing, seems to recall the manner of a time long past. Had François Villon been as great a saint as he was a sinner, he might, I think, have written something like the best of these.

"'When I awaken I am still with thee,'
And thou hast been all round me through the night.
I, waking with a throb of ecstasy,
Thank thee beforehand for the day's delight,
And trust to thee, sweet God, to rule it right—
Sweet faithful God, who lovest to the end.
And, be the day all dark or heavenly bright,
I needs must love whatever thou dost send;
For thou dost take thine infant in thine arms,
And doest for me all thou dost require;
And thou wilt give me all my heart's desire,
And keep me safe from Satan and his harms—
Bearing me in the path thy love has planned;
And none, dear Lord, can take me from thy hand."

"*The Lover's own hour is that in which he suffers for his Beloved.*"
"*I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.*"
"*My hour is not yet come.*"

"*Thine hour*, my Lord, I hear Thee say:
Desirable that hour must be
Which straitens, by its short delay,
The Ruler of Eternity.
Oh! let me then in Thee rejoice,
And grant me such an hour to know!
I hear Thy voice
Reply, in accents grave and low:
'Hora amantis illa est
Qua pro amico patitur.'

"Then that was not some tender hour
Of converse with Thy Mother sweet,
Nor when the wonders of Thy power
Brought new disciples to Thy feet:
Thine hour was that drear April noon,
When to the Cross they nailed Thee down:
Death is the boon
For joy of which Thou wear'st a crown:
'Hora amantis illa est
Qua pro amico patitur.'

"Then my hour shall not be the hour
When creatures praise and favour pay,
Nor even when Thy love and power
Lead me exulting on my way:
My hour, like Thine, my Lord and Love,
Shall be the hour of pain and loss—
Darkness above;
Beneath, the thorns, the nails, the Cross:
'Hora amantis illa est
Qua pro amico patitur.'

"And when at last that hour draws nigh
That bids me leave the flesh behind,
Shall I then turn from Calvary,
A milder death than Thine to find?
Since Thou didst die all comfortless,
Shall I not welcome such a lot,
If Thou thus bless
One who in life has loved Thee not?
'Hora amantis illa est
Qua pro amico patitur.'

"O Love! How blinded then are they,
Who paint Thee crowned with roses bright!
'Tis well, indeed, for such to say
That Love is still bereft of sight.
But they who on the Truth do gaze,
As well as may be here below,
Love thorny ways
Better than all the flowers that blow.
'Hora amantis illa est
Qua pro amico patitur.'"

"The Awakening.

"Awake, arise, O soul, from sleep,
From those wild fields where no winds blow,
Thou canst not now those visions keep
That so delight thee: they must go
Into the dreamy past.

"Awake, O senses to the wear
Of life, the caution and the strain.

There is yet much to do and bear
Ere death shall be the end of pain
And peace shall come at last.

"Return, weak heart, take up thy weight,
And bear it through another day:
The joy that seemed so real of late,
Like other joys, must sink away
Into the dreamy past.

"Return to labour and to pain:
Forget not grief, nor seek for rest:
Sigh not for death: 'tis worse than vain:
Death will end all when God sees best;
And peace shall come at last."

"When love makes all things easy,
From the greatest to the least;
When death doth seem a bridal,
And life a lengthened feast—
O Love, how can I show my love,
When love makes all things light?
Bear patiently thy weight of joy,
And love with all thy might."

"I know, my Lord, that at the last
I needs must come to you:
Enough of harm is in the past:
Ah yes, I know this too.
But now my heart and spirit fail,
And I forget your face;
And knowledge is of no avail,
Without your grace.

"I have offended you, the one
Most sweet and perfect Good:
I know that I have trampled on
Your passion and your blood.
Resists my heart all stonily,
And I forget your face;
And what shall knowledge profit me
Without your grace?

"'From him to whom much has been given,
Much also shall be asked'
You said to me, my life, my heaven,
When in your light I basked;
But all your words have been in vain,
And I forget your face;
And knowledge, Lord, has been my bane,
Without your grace.

"In deserts where there is no light,
I, wandering, seek repose:
Arise, O Love, upon the night,
And scatter all your foes:
Raise up the heart and soul that fail,
And I will seek your face;
And much shall knowledge then avail,
Joined with your grace."

III.

The following letters give evidence of her deep sympathy with her father's later poetry. It would be difficult to find sounder or more appreciative criticism than they contain.

"St. Leonards,
"April 11th, '75.

"MY DEAREST PAPA,

"At last Sunday is come, and I can write about your Ode which Mama so kindly copied out. It would be impertinence in me to praise it, but I can say that it gave me very great pleasure, and new pleasure every time I read it. To say nothing of the general sense, in which I flatter myself I quite understand you, you may imagine how, under the circumstances, these lines went to my heart:

'The daisied path of poverty'

and

'The brightest third of the dead virtues three.'[1]

[1] Both passages are from "The Standards." There are numerous allusions to the Odes in these letters. I have not thought it necessary to give references in every instance.

I hope Dr. Newman has read it. When shall I have the others? And what did the 'Pall Mall' say of it? I wish you had brought the critique. Ever since I read it and imagined all the rest you have been writing, I have been indulging in a sort of ecstasy of pride at being your daughter, a very innocent sort of pride, I hope. (You see I am so gushing, because nuns have no hearts!) As for myself, dear Papa, I will not say anything about it: some things are too good to be spoken of; but you must thank God for me, and yourself for letting me be a nun. I know many people do not think we are nuns at all; but that is so much the better, if our Lord thinks we are so. I had no time to think of anything the day you were all here, but of course, since then, everything has gone on with the usual delightful monotony, which I know you envy.

"How beautiful Bertha's paintings are: she does *very* much better than I ever saw her do before; and she seems to think very little of them. Please will you remember to give Tenny my love and thanks for his note? I hope that he tasted the wedding-cake.[1] . . . If you mean to prophesy a persecution do not go away and leave it all to me; you can come and die in defence of the convent. You made me so happy by what you said when we were first coming out of the Church the other day: I often repeat it to myself.

"Your loving child in J. C.,

"S. Mary Christina.

"S. H. C. J."[2]

"The Convent,

"Feb. 12th, '76.

"My dear Papa,

"When I have received two letters and two Odes, I suppose you think it is high time to answer and return thanks. Indeed, it seems to me that poverty is indeed as you say 'to have all things without care or thought;' for I have only to express a wish, as in this case, or even to form it sometimes, and the thing arrives. Thank you very much for sending the Odes. No one ever succeeded before in speaking of God truly in verse and at the same time not

[1] Her cake, provided for the day when she made her vows.

[2] Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

'screaming instead of singing' as you once said to me of ———'s poems. That you should know what you want to show others, viz. the perfection of the state of marriage, is not so strange as that you understand perfectly what makes the real happiness of religious life (and it *is* real), however unromantic and common the exterior may look, as it does in our society. Was it not curious?—I thought so much of you on the Feast of the Espousals of the Blessed Virgin, though I had no idea of the intention[1] you tell me of. I hope she will help you to do it very well. I have been thinking that it seemed like a beautiful *courtesy*, if I dare say so, on the part of God, as He had become man and not woman, to exalt a woman so highly that enough cannot be said of her dignity. How true the last part of this Ode is, about the eagle looking like a rag or stone; and yet it has never been said before. . . . I am much better than when you saw me, and shall not be allowed to commit suicide, however much I might wish to do so. So please do not be concerned for my health. I only hope you are all as well.

"Your loving child,
"S. MARY CHRISTINA.
"S. H. C. J."

"Convent H. C. Jesus,
"November 28th, '77.

"MY DEAR PAPA,

"I do not know how it is; but we always say so little when we meet, that I must write to you too. I must have the pleasure of telling you again how often your words come to my mind and answer my thoughts. I was wondering one day if it was pleasing to God to hear us say the same psalms over and over again, and I remembered what you say of the child wanting its mother to repeat her little song.[2] To encourage myself in little trials, I often repeat these lines from Frederick's[3] last letter, 'Splendid privations,'

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[1] Probably the "intention" was a wish for inspiration to write "The Child's Purchase."

[2] 'And all his art
Is as the babe's, who wins his mother to repeat
Her little song so sweet.'—*Legem tuam dilexi.*

[3] The hero of "Faithful for ever" and "Victories of Love."

etc.: they make me ashamed to complain of so little. These are only specimens: I cannot tell you how often such pieces occur to me. If, as you said, Lourdes answered *all* your expectations, I hope before very long to see the beginning of your third and greatest work. The water you brought is a great treasure to me: I sometimes dip my finger in it for a great treat, but I am very much afraid of using it up. My class are learning part of Milton, and I told them how he borrowed and imitated,[1] though I did not say who found it out.

"Henry has written a parody on Wordsworth's 'Ode on Immortality': he is going to send it to me, and if it is good perhaps you would like to see it, if you do not think it was too presumptuous to parody such a thing. He did it some time ago, and says I might not care to see it, as perhaps I do not know the Ode. For which I told him that I knew it by heart before he could spell three letters. So perhaps he will be too indignant to reply at all. Do you know a great gale is prophesied, that was to come to-day? I think it must have come too soon, for there was a very great wind a short time ago: it blew in some windows in the town. The sea must have been very high that night. I always imagine you down on the beach looking at it when those storms come. If you are going to write to me, please do so before next Sunday, as Advent will be coming.

"Your loving child,
"S. MARY CHRISTINA.
"S. H. C. J."

"The Convent,
"April 14th.

"MY DEAR PAPA,

"You must be expecting to hear about the Odes before now. If I say anything foolish you must remember I am one of the 'hare-brained brood' you mention. In the first place, St. Peter says of St. Paul's Epistles that 'there are in them certain things hard to be understood, which many unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own damnation.' I think that might be

[1] Patmore detected in Milton much suggestion from Spenser's shorter poems.

said of the 'Odes,' 'Remembered grace,' for instance; but anyone who would offend God on such a consideration could never have really known and loved Him. Of course you know about the theology of it better than I do. That last part, from 'the last new [1] Oracle,' how true it is. Some lines have more truth than can be said, as 'Many speak wisely,' etc. As the beautiful poem says, these (compared to the 'Angel') are 'like a thrush's song' (compared to a lark's). 'Eros' is exquisite: it is enough to say that I know what you mean: I like this line very much, 'It is a Spirit, though it seems red gold;' but, for poetical beauty apart from the purely spiritual, the beginning to 'whither they depart' is wonderful and delicious. 'Let be' of course you know is most profound, but let me say so too. 'Another is mistook through his deceitful likeness to his look,' is one of those pieces of wisdom that see round the corner, like a looking-glass. What a comfort it is to think that God really knows everyone; for we know very little of each other, I am more and more convinced. 'Legem tuam dilexi' is delightful to me, and I do not know how people can object to it while God, of whom we name so many attributes, is defined to be 'A simple Act' by the Xtian doctrine books. The 'Toys' is very, very touching: I like it very much. 'Magna est Veritas' is delightful, and ends with a touch of something too deep to be called satire. It seems to me quite true about the ingenious blaspheming, though I am afraid the last word is all the credit they often get. I knew the first IX. Odes by heart before, and they very often 'say themselves to me,' whether I like it or not: it is like a tune that will finish itself if you begin it, because each note is the natural consequence of the former. Of course the 'Deliciæ,' etc., is too beautiful to praise. I think the Odes are very like Holy Scripture in being so simple that anyone might imagine they understood all there is, and so profound that few will really do so. They are also like Scripture in the way Shakespere is, viz., in being intensely human, and in not saying the words allowed to express the thing, but the *thing* itself. It is very painful to think how most people will prefer such verse as ——'s, but that kind of sorrow we

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[1] Quoted from memory. Patmore had written "high."

have to feel for everything really good. There are two lines in one Ode that I could wish were not there. If I have said anything presumptuous, please forgive it. With much love and many thanks,

"Your loving child,

"S. MARY CHRISTINA.

"S. H. C. J."

CHAPTER XIX

LONDON LIFE, CARLYLE, RUSKIN

FROM 1862 till 1874 Patmore's life had been for the most part that of a recluse. While he was at Heron's Ghyll his visitors had been few: he did not care to have many guests together in the house; and when his particular friends visited him, preferred that they should come alone, so that he might enjoy their society undisturbed. Towards the end of this period, he began to feel detached from the quiet country life, was already, for reasons of economy, contemplating a change of abode, and foresaw that he might shortly become more dependent on ordinary social life. In 1874 I persuaded him to become a candidate for the Savile Club, of which some of his friends were already members. He was elected by the Committee at the first opportunity, but failed to make much use of his privileges. The great majority of members were considerably his juniors, and Patmore, who always found himself more at home in small companies, was not specially adapted to club life. He retired after a few years of membership; nor did he at any time, before or after, join or become a candidate for any other club.

Late in 1874, he left Heron's Ghyll, and shortly after took a furnished house on Campden Hill, where he was able to renew his intimacy with many of his old friends. He sought out the Præ-Raphaelite circle, by this time somewhat dispersed by changes of abode, and disunited by divergence of aim; but some of its members often came to his house, es-

pecially on Sunday evenings. He saw too, at this time, many other of his former friends—Mr. and Mrs. Procter, Lord Houghton, Locker-Lampson, F. T. Palgrave, Carlyle, and Ruskin—, and made many new acquaintances among men of distinction in the literary world. There is no record to show when he had first come to know Carlyle. In 1853, Carlyle had, as we have seen, written him a high encomium on "Tamerton Church Tower," which was the prelude to other letters in praise of the several instalments of the "Angel," (see vol. ii.). Patmore had sent him a copy of the nine Odes privately printed in 1868, and now lent him the manuscript of such further Odes as he had written before 1875, (p. 87). Unfortunately there is nothing to show what opinion Carlyle formed of these. In all probability it was conveyed verbally; for it was at this time that the intercourse between the two was most frequent. It may however be inferred from the following letters and memoranda, that he was at least as favourably impressed by the later as he had been by the earlier poems.

The friendship which was thus renewed during the year of Patmore's residence in London, was maintained with the fullest cordiality till Carlyle's death.

Patmore writes to his wife:

"I mean to take advantage of the time I am obliged to be here to see more of Carlyle. He seems quite pleased if I go and take a walk with him. The unison of our likes and dislikes is quite funny. You should hear him pour his scorn on ———, and, I believe he is the only man living, besides myself, who dares to think, much less speak, evil of Heine."

"Tavistock Hotel. Wednesday.

"My Dear Mary,

". . . . The evening with Carlyle, who was quite affectionate, he complaining, two or three times, that I had

not been to see him lately, and urging me to write, almost as vehemently as he would recommend most of his literary acquaintances—not to do so.

"Yours ever,
"C. P."

The following recollections of their intercourse at this time were written at a later date.

"During the year before we came to Hastings, when we lived in Campden Hill Road, I used constantly to see Carlyle. He was more than kind: his manners were affectionate to me, and I never left him without his begging me to come again soon. I was often his companion in his afternoon walks and drives, and spent many a long evening in his chimney-corner. I was a good listener, and never thought of contradicting him, any more than I should have thought of contradicting a locomotive at full speed. I was surprised to find how very few people he saw, though he appeared to be far from difficult of access. There was seldom anybody else with him when I spent my evenings at his house. I told him once that I had just finished reading his life of Frederick the Great, and I made one or two remarks showing my appreciation of it. I was quite astonished by the pathetic way in which he expressed himself pleased by what I said, and his humble complaint that he had heard so few sympathetic observations concerning his great work."

"When I bade good-bye to him, Carlyle, with his hand on the open door, and without any connection with our previous conversation, said to me: 'Why don't you write a history of the Anglo-Saxons? You are the only man in England who could do it.' I have not the least idea what he meant, for I know little of history, and never professed to have any particular interest in the Anglo-Saxons."

Patmore's friendship with Ruskin was also of long standing: it had certainly been mature in 1851, (p. 86). Ruskin had been a frequent visitor at Patmore's house during his first wife's lifetime, and they had corresponded, though somewhat intermittently, during the years of Patmore's seclusion.

Ruskin had, in 1860, stood godfather to Henry John, Patmore's youngest son, and two years later, had obtained for the second son, Tennyson, a nomination to the Blue-coat school. Personal intercourse between them was renewed during Patmore's residence in London: Ruskin, influenced no doubt by his warm regard for Emily Augusta Patmore, had been much interested in the eldest daughter, whose appearance and manner he admired (p. 269), and was now specially impressed by Bertha Patmore's drawings, about which, as his letters show, he continued for many years to give valuable advice. A considerable number of Ruskin's letters to Patmore have been preserved, and selections from them are given in vol. ii. Unfortunately but one letter of Patmore's to Ruskin has come to hand.

All but the first of the following extracts from Patmore's letters refer to visits paid by him to Brantwood in 1875 and in 1879. As none of these are dated, it is impossible to say to which of these visits they refer. These, as well as the correspondence, give evidence of a warm friendship, not incompatible with some rather rough sparring, which however does not seem to have marred their amicable relations. The correspondence apparently ended in 1880.

From Campden Hill Patmore writes:

"Mr. Ruskin came expressly from Denmark Hill yesterday to give Bertha a lesson in colour perspective. You can't think how he seems struck with the drawing she gave you. He said, 'I would give the world to be able to do anything like it!!' and he said that William Hunt's things were coarse, and had nothing like the 'exquisite sense of beauty' shown in Bertha's work. He wants Bertha to go to Coniston that he may be able to give her more time. He is coming again next week, to give Bertha another lesson."

While on a visit to Ruskin he writes:

"I spend the morning—the time when Ruskin is at work

—in rowing on the lake by myself. The lake is some seven or eight miles long, and perhaps three-fourths of a mile wide, with great mountains about the head of it where Brantwood is, and lower hills at the other end. Hitherto the clouds have never left the tops of the higher hills, but there has been only a shower or two, and it has been good weather for walking or rowing. Yesterday afternoon I had a long walk with Ruskin, and a great deal of interesting talk. Mr. and Mrs. Severn are here, and a gentleman named Burgess, who seems to be a kind of artistic assistant to Ruskin, whose attention is at present given to Botany. He is at present copying a patch of moss on a rock-side above some water, in which water he sits half the day—of course by the help of a chair and a foot-stool."

"Ruskin's ordinary manners are courteous and obliging almost to an embarrassing degree, but a little scratch or contradiction will put him out strangely. I was walking with him and Severn among the mountains near Coniston, and we stopped to admire the beauty of a wild strawberry plant, which was in fruit and flower at the same time, in a nook by a little gully. As we went on Ruskin said to me, 'I suppose, Patmore, that we are the only three men in England who would have passed that plant without eating the fruit.' I, shy of praise for such a singular sensibility, replied, 'I believe, Ruskin, that you are the only man in England who would have thought of eating it.' He was evidently hurt, and was quite silent for some time. Another time I praised a little book of old Catholic devotion, called the 'Spiritual Combat,' which I saw among his books. 'O, do you think so much of it? Now, it seems to me to be drivel: how do you account for that?' said he. I replied, 'I suppose that you have not had the particular experience which explains it.' This also manifestly annoyed him."

"Ruskin told me that, to hear ——— talk of my poetry, was like seeing a little devil jumping upon a bed of lilies."

"Nothing can be kinder and more sedulously courteous than Ruskin; and the Severns are a delightfully pleasant, lively, and unaffected couple. My whole day, every day since I have been here, has been filled with healthy, active amusement—rowing in the morning, walking up the

mountains in the afternoon; and talking, laughing, and listening to nice unlearned music in the evenings."

"I leave here to-morrow for Carstairs. I don't expect to be so well off there as here. It is a great country house, always full of people—eighteen or twenty people at least sitting down to dinner every day. Mr. Monteith is extremely good company, but of course I shall not see very much of him when I shall be only one among so many guests. Among these however there are pretty sure to be some pleasant and probably distinguished people, and I daresay I shall have a good time, though not so good as I am having here, with Ruskin almost all to myself. He is very fond of talking about the Catholic Religion, and says he thinks it likely he shall become a Catholic some day—but I think it is attractive to him only from the idea of pleasant intellectual repose which it presents to him. The arguments for its truth strike him just for the moment, but leave no impression, as far as I can see."

"Another journey of seven hours brought me yesterday to this house, which though pleasant enough in its way, is not so much in my line as Brantwood. Carstairs House is quite like a palace, with lots of company and good living. The Monteiths are very friendly, good people, and Mr. Monteith himself is a man of fine literary taste; but the rest of the company is such as one commonly meets in country houses, and I find some difficulty at times in keeping up the talk with my next neighbour, who knows as little of books as I do of grouse.

"Society is not my 'place,' as you say it is. I would rather have one hour's walk and talk with you in the garden, than all the pleasure I have had from 'Society,' since I saw you—although my time has not been passed unpleasantly, either here or at Coniston."

CHAPTER XX

LOURDES

DURING the Heron's Ghyll days Patmore rarely left home. In 1871 however, having to go abroad for family reasons, he took the opportunity of visiting the principal battle-fields of the war of 1870. In this he had been keenly interested, and his political views as well as the anti-French prejudice which he had acquired in his youth, when he had spent some unhappy months in Paris (p. 36), made him a warm partisan of Germany. This sympathy however had not prevented him from writing a lampoon on a telegram sent by the King of Prussia to his wife after one of the great battles. The epigram exists in many versions, of which I give the following, which his family believe to be the original :

> "This is to say, my dear Augusta,
> We've had another awful buster :
> Ten thousand Frenchmen sent below !
> Thank God from whom all blessings flow !"

This was evolved impromptu during dinner at Heron's Ghyll, and was, as Patmore used to say, "the most popular poem he had ever written." [1]

[1] As no date is given for the composition of these lines, the actual occasion of them must remain matter for conjecture. The "Times" of Aug. 8, 1870, gives the following referring to Woerth :

"*King William to Queen Augusta :* Wonderful luck ! This new great victory won by Fritz. Thank God for his mercy. We have taken thirty cannon, two eagles, six mitrailleuses, 4,000 prisoners. MacMahon received reinforcement from the main army.

On his return from this tour he wrote to his wife as follows:

"Tavistock Hotel, 1872.

"DEAR MARY,

"I have had an interesting little tour at the expense of £5 more than it would have cost me to return by Cologne. I have been carefully over the greatest battle-fields—Saarbrucken, Regonville, Gravelottes, St. Privat, and have visited the principal *forts* of Paris, as well as St. Cloud—which is totally destroyed, town and chateau. The devastation in Paris is enormous. On Wednesday, I drove thirty-five miles, at least *ten* through absolute ruin. The Bois de Boulogne is not much hurt, and none of the villages occupied by the Germans have been damaged, except two or three burned down for strategical purposes.

"*Nearly all* the ruins are the wanton work of the French themselves: not only of the communists but of the persons in command during the Siege.

"I saw plenty of Germans—soldiers and others—in and about Paris. The murderous ill-feeling seems to have quite departed. French and German were talking together in the carriage with me from Metz

"Yours C. P."

He was greatly struck by the attitude of the German people, and confirmed in his opinion that "War is the ordained way of all alive." His observations made on this tour inspired his Ode "Peace,"[1]

"A victorious salute (101 guns) was fired off upon the field of battle."

This seems likely to have been the message which instigated the epigram, which however it only partially justifies.

Nor do I know how it got about, as it did immediately and generally. A photograph was published, showing the King of Prussia kneeling on the battle-field, with Patmore's lines below. I have heard that others first saw them at their village post office. They are quoted in Lowe's "Life of Prince Bismarck."

[1] The passage in "Peace," which specially refers to this journey, is as follows:

"Let those whose pleasant chance
Took them, like me, among the German towns,

written some three years later, from which I have quoted a passage at the end of Chapter XVI.

Between 1871 and 1893 Patmore made several other visits to the Continent. Among these were four pilgrimages to Lourdes: in 1877, 1878, 1881 and 1885. His friend Monsignor Rouse was his companion on the first two visits, the present Mrs. Patmore on the third, and his second daughter, Bertha, on the last. In 1879 Mary Patmore took her stepson Henry to Lourdes. The "intentions" which prompted these expeditions are explained in the following letters, in Patmore's autobiography (vol. ii.) and in other letters and memoranda (pp. 257 and 277). His main motive was to strengthen his spiritual life by complete obedience to the will of the Church: he desired too to obtain inspiration for his Ode, the "Child's Purchase"; also to benefit his second daughter, who had been lame from infancy, and his youngest son, Henry, who suffered from an affection of one eye, the sight of which he eventually lost. The following letters were written during the two earlier pilgrimages.

"[1877]

"All my preparations are made, and I start for Lourdes to-morrow, at 7 o'clock. I have a presentiment that good will come of it. It is a good way of declaring to one's-self and others that the Church's fashions are not changeable, and that it is as well to do what her general voice recommends as well as what she commands. I am in great luck to have secured Dr. Rouse's co-operation as well as com-

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After the war that plucked the fangs from France,
With me pronounce
Whether the frequent black, which then arrayed
Child, wife, and maid,
Did most to magnify the sombreness of grief,
Or add the beauty of a staid relief
And freshening foil,
To cheerful-hearted Honour's ready smile!"

panionship, for he has promised me that *his* intentions shall be mine. In order not to dissipate the singleness of my purpose in this journey, I intend not to stop to see any sights or take any unnecessary rest till I reach Lourdes, and until I have finished my purpose there. After that I shall feel at liberty to look about me. I fear however that we shall have very bad weather. A great storm is telegraphed as approaching from the Atlantic, and the glass is now fast falling. I hope the journey there will be disagreeable, since peas in my boots would not consist with my constitution. When you hear the wind howling on Tuesday afternoon, you will be able to think how delightfully sick I probably am!"

[1877]

"We left Paris at eight on Tuesday night, and travelled by train twenty hours without stopping, till we reached Lourdes—which for beauty and sublimity defies all description. It is a valley of small mountains, about 1,000 feet high, with the higher, snow-clad mountains—which look as high as the highest Alps—peeping over their shoulders into this beautiful little nest. The town itself is wonderfully picturesque. Like Freiburg, 'only more so.' The air of the Pyrennees is as fine as ether. I got strong in it immediately.

"The effect of this climate on the health and spirits is quite intoxicating. The air is cool and sharp, but the sun is like a hot fire close by. One may put up one's hands to warm them by it. The world looks like a jewel for brightness. Snow-fields, thirty miles off, look half a mile away. Little lizards run about the rocks in the hot light, and beautiful half-butterflies, half-grasshoppers, leap and fly wherever one moves."

"Lourdes. Saturday.
[1877]

"DEAR MARY,

"I was very glad to have your note. I think every day that it was quite wicked not to bring you here, you would have been so entirely delighted. We have come in the very nick of time to escape all excursionists and all sensational pilgrimages.

"There are plenty of individual 'pilgrims,' as the newspapers would say; and they do their praying and their

visiting in a quiet, pleasant style, which suits us better than the ten-thousand-strong visitations of the season. The last considerable pilgrimage—a month or two ago—actually consisted of exactly ten thousand *men*—who came all at once in ten trains of a thousand each.

"The scenery and the weather are heavenly, the former far beyond the best that I expected. It is as great as the Alps—*i. e.*, snow mountains, 9,000 ft. high, but it is withal sweet, soft and civilized. The mountains are all in lovely curves and piques:—not in the brutal and dog-tooth outlines of the Alps."

[1877]

"Lourdes itself is quite the loveliest place I ever saw. It is in the very centre of all the finest scenery—just as Interlaken is in the Alps, and all the famous places, Pau, Cauterets, Bagnères de Bigorre, Eaux Chaudes, etc., are within a morning's drive. We intend to stay here till Monday, and shall then probably go on to Saragossa and Pampeluna.

"Yours ever C. P."

"Lourdes, Oct: 11th:
[1877]

"DEAR WIFE,

"All is going on well with us here. We have given up making any further excursions in order that we may have the next few days for our special purpose. The longer I am here the more I like it. The climate is heavenly, the people all nice—and unlike the Swiss as can be. One or two great pilgrimages of from 1,000 to 2,000 people come every day at six in the morning, say their prayers all day, and leave in torch-light processions at night, saying the Litany of Loretto from the Grotto to the Station. It makes railways quite poetical. We are seriously thinking of going on to Manresa, near Saragossa, if we find the journey at all practicable. . . . .

"Yours, C. P."

"Lourdes. Friday Morning.
[1878]

"DEAR MARY,

"We are here safe after a not intolerable journey.

It seems like *coming home*, the place is in every way so delightful. The hills and houses are looking like jewels in the quiet ardour of the sun. We offered our Masses for Henry and our hopes of him are increased by a miracle we were lucky enough to come in for yesterday. A peasant girl, with the most exquisite look of innocence and gratitude, had just come from the bath entirely cured of a paralysis of three years' standing. We had some talk with her and her mother as she was walking off with no touch of lameness, and the limb, which had been hitherto entirely insensible, restored to feeling and full strength. There could be no mistake about it. Rachel could not have acted the part.

"We are going to spend to-day at Pau. . . . . Give my love to all and tell them to work well for Henry till our time here is over. . . . .

"Yours, C. P."

[1878]

"There was a pilgrimage of some 2,000 persons here yesterday, and it was very striking to see them going to the train at night, in a procession five abreast, and half a mile long, holding lighted candles and singing hymns.

"We are getting on here as well as possible. The weather is lovely. At night it rains in the valleys and snows on the mountains, and all day the sun shines with such sweet ardour that earth looks like a living jewel. On Monday, we went to Gavarnie, a village on the frontiers of Spain, and about 5,000 feet above the sea. There, from Cliffs 5,000 feet higher, the glaciers, melting, pour down cataracts into the most awful cauldron of dark walls. One cataract, the highest in Europe, falls 1,400 feet at one leap, 500 feet higher than the Staubach, the highest in Switzerland, which I daresay you remember. The scene is said altogether to be the grandest in Europe. Lord Houghton, who has seen most of the fine things in the world, told me he had never seen anything equal to it.

"We find that our plan, of hiring a carriage and going from town to town for a week, is impracticable on account of the formation of the mountains, the gorges of which end in 'cul-de-sacs,' instead of passing into other gorges, as in most mountain countries. So we have settled down here till Tuesday, when we think of returning.

"I think I get what I pray for here (Lourdes), because I

do not pray so eagerly as most people do. I remember that the place is one of miracle, and that the less one seems to do of oneself the more likely Our Lady is to work for us.

"St. John of the Cross, I remember, says that this absence of eagerness is a great secret of successful prayer. He says indeed that it is best never to *ask* for anything, but simply to represent to God how it stands with us, and leave it to Him to mend it or not as it seems best to Him."

"Lourdes. Monday,
[1878]

"Dear, our plans of continuing our travels have been thrown out by the break-up of the weather. We have had four days of weather here such as I have never seen or felt anywhere for beauty and pleasantness, but this morning the rain is falling in torrents, and we shall probably have no more settled fine days. On Friday and Saturday we had long drives among the mountains, on Friday to Bétharram, where there is another famous shrine, and such a Calvary—a mountain 8,000 feet high, from the first station to the last, each station having a Romanesque Chapel, or rather church, of the fourteenth or fifteenth century, of beauty that would drive Champneys crazy. From the top you see a vast fertile plain with towns, villages, and rivers on the one hand, and chestnut covered slopes and snowy peaks on the other. It is a place to live in, and I propose to let the Mansion, and come and settle here altogether as soon as possible. There are not many people here, but several of them are English—and not disagreeable. The Grotto and Church are well filled, but not thronged, and everything is a deal too pleasant for a pilgrimage.

"Is Bertha cured yet? If so she should send her boot to the Grotto. I was talking to a very pleasant Irish priest who lives here. He has seen dozens of miracles, and speaks of them as if he rather wished for a change.

"Yours C. P."

"Lourdes. Wednesday.
[1878]

"My Dear Mary,

"Don't give up hope yet: I look to next Sunday as the anniversary of the day of my last visit, and it is on that

day I expect to get again all and perhaps more than all I came for.

"I don't think it would do, on the whole, to exchange our icebergs for these glaciers. There would be too great a break in the continuity of life. We must "better ourselves" where we are, and not by changing our places, like London cooks. This however is a place to which you *must* come some day. Even the material beauty of this position is past all description.

"We are just back from a two days' excursion to Luz, St. Sauveur, Gavarnie and the Bréche de Roland.

"Yours, C. P."

CHAPTER XXI.

HENRY PATMORE

I.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE PRINTED WITH HENRY PATMORE'S POEMS[1]

"HENRY JOHN, third son of Coventry Patmore, was born at Finchley on the 8th of May, 1860. His mother died in consumption two years after his birth, and Henry probably inherited her delicate constitution. As a child his health caused much anxiety, though he seemed in great part to outgrow this weakness after beginning his school life at St. Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, in 1870. He confessed long afterwards to have suffered keenly on first leaving home from the sensitiveness of his disposition, which made him shrink from intercourse with his schoolfellows. But the gentle little boy, who stood by shy and inactive while his companions enjoyed their rough sports, easily outstripped them in their studies, and year by year, as he rose from the lowest to the highest form, seldom failed to carry off the first prize. His continued success is mentioned in his letters home with perfect simplicity.

"In 1877 Henry passed the London University Matriculation in Honours. It was intended that he should remain at St. Cuthbert's for several years and read for the B.A. and M.A. degrees, with some idea of his taking a classical professorship in the college. But in the course of the next summer he was attacked by a malady in the left eye which soon proved incurable, and all idea of returning to Ushaw after the vacation had to be abandoned. The disease was slow in its progress and attended with great pain, which, with the many other sufferings that were crowded into the

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[1] A hundred and twenty-five copies of this little volume were printed by Mr. Henry Daniel a year after Henry's death.

REV. JAMES A. GRANT BEQUEST TO
ST. MARY'S COLLEGE LIBRARY, 1926

HENRY JOHN PATMORE.

From a photograph, 1875.

last years of his short life, were borne almost without a murmur. By the end of another twelvemonth the sight was quite gone, but he was then able to use the right eye with tolerable comfort.

"From time to time, during his school days, Henry had written trifles showing originality. But it was only in the spring of 1880 that he began to look upon writing as possibly his vocation. Some of the poems now printed were composed during that year; but his time was chiefly taken up with a Grecian love tale, delicate and beautiful in thought, and executed in a powerful and original style. Several other prose pieces written during this and the following years are disguised histories of his own thoughts and longings; one only is the simple story of his love for the half real, half imaginary 'Flora.'

"In the spring of 1881 Henry went out to the Cape with some friends, a sea-voyage having been recommended as likely to strengthen his constitution. He returned in July, with the firm conviction that a great illness was coming upon him, and in the beginning of August was seized with a violent congestion of the right lung. For six weeks he lay in a burning fever between life and death. It was thought scarcely possible that his strength should rally after the extreme weakness to which he was reduced by this attack. The change came very suddenly. One afternoon, having up to that time scarcely had strength to say a few necessary words each day, he began talking merrily with his sisters who were sitting with him, and asked them for writing materials. It was during the long and weary convalescence which began thus unexpectedly that most of his poems were written.

"By the summer of 1882 Henry had so recovered as to be able to think of choosing a profession. His former idea of a professorship was abandoned, and the law fixed on. After a month's trial, to prove his ability for the necessary amount of labour, he was articled to Mr. Henry Watson Parker, of St. Michael's Rectory, Cornhill, and comfortably settled in a lodging at Hampstead. He entered on his new duties with zeal; the change of climate and occupation seemed beneficial to his health, and everything promised success. But about Christmas time the old feeling of weakness came upon him, and, though he struggled bravely against it, he was forced to give in and ask for leave of

absence. It was willingly granted, and on February 15th, 1883, Henry returned to his home at Hastings, never again to leave it.

"A few days later he caught a chill that brought on pleurisy. As the doctor who had been called in left the room where Henry sat in an arm-chair before the fire, one of his sisters entered it. In a calm, firm voice, which in itself proved the truth of his words, he said: 'I had made up my mind to die before the doctor came.' He was carried up to his bed, and through four days and nights of fever and laboured breathing lay peacefully waiting for the end. Now and then he gasped out a few words of thanks and comfort to those who tended him, and who can never forget the bright glow, as of a reflected light, that, when he spoke, lit up the handsome face on which death had already set his mark. Early on the afternoon of February 24th his father sat at his bedside for the last time, and Henry listened with interest to a proposal that some of his poems should be printed. 'I should like it very much,' he said. Soon afterwards there came a great quiet; the heavy gasping ceased, and he lay for two hours motionless, with soft breathing, like a sleeping child. At half-past five he opened his eyes and looked towards those who were watching by his side; there were three gentle sighs, and without the slightest struggle he had passed away.

"GERTRUDE PATMORE."

"To the foregoing note I will only add that the following verses, which I print to please Henry, are very inadequate indications of the power and delicacy of the mind and heart which produced them. At twenty years of age his spiritual and imaginative insight were far beyond those of any man I ever met; and he instructed me much better than I could instruct him in matters which I had contemplated and studied all my life.

"Once, when I had been commending his verses, he laughed, and said that I should perhaps be known in future times as 'the Father of Patmore.' Had he lived, his jest would probably have become prophecy.

"COVENTRY PATMORE."

II.

These brief and touching records of a brother and son are reprinted from the volume of poems to which they serve as a preface. So far as biography is concerned, it is not possible to supplement them to any considerable extent. Henry Patmore was so constitutionally shy and retiring, that none but his relatives and most intimate friends could obtain any very deep insight into his nature and character. He was, I think, very seldom at home when I was staying at Heron's Ghyll, and in the earlier Hastings days he used habitually to absent himself from meals when visitors were there. Later, he was wont to present himself in the study when his father was talking with his friends. He would enter with a sort of shy precipitancy, and remain long, an intent and evidently critical listener—very rarely speaking, but occasionally, with an obvious effort, making some unexpected remark, which, like some of his father's in his less intimate intercourse, was apt to break the current of conversation. Patmore evidently encouraged his presence, thinking that it was to his son's advantage that he should so far emerge from his habitual retirement; but, to the visitor, the presence of this silent and thoughtful youth, who gave no indication whether his attitude were sympathetic or hostile, was necessarily somewhat embarrassing, while his occasional volcanic irruptions into the talk were scarcely more conducive to intercourse than the more usual silence. I heard afterwards that he was in the habit of discussing with his sisters and friends the conversations which had passed in his presence, and that he used to explain how such and such a point had been missed or mistaken, showing evidently that it was shyness alone which had prevented him from taking a full share in the talk. The same

reticence which he showed in personal intercourse was evinced in his dealings with his written work. He distinctly belonged to the "genus cryptogram"; and, while he wrote with zest and enthusiasm, was excessively loth to show his productions to anyone, even to his father. For example, he had, while staying with the family of the lady who afterwards became his father's third wife, written a story which he was advised by her to publish, as she thought highly of it. She urged him to obtain my judgment on it, which he had reluctantly consented to do; but, as is shown by a letter printed below, he was immensely relieved when he found that my departure freed him from this dreaded ordeal. Mr. Greenwood tells me that, when editor of "The St. James's Gazette," he received from Henry some verses marked by unmistakable genius, but marred by certain boyish inaccuracies which could have been easily corrected. Henry asked him at the same time for an opinion as to his poetic power. Mr. Greenwood would most readily have printed the verses, could some slight modifications have been made with the writer's consent; but Henry had given him the strictest injunctions not to write to him at his home, and had given no other address or any opportunity of communication; so the idea of publication had to be dropped, to the editor's great regret, and for the same reason he was unable to give him either advice or encouragement. Henry also from time to time sent verses to "The Spectator" and "Athenæum" (where they were printed) entirely without his father's knowledge.

He did however, in time, conquer his reluctance so far as his father was concerned, and was greatly delighted and encouraged by the appreciation he obtained. He usually pretended not to have read Patmore's poems, and said to one of his intimates,

', I don't know what sort of a poet my father is—but he is certainly an excellent critic," and when asked what had led him to this conclusion, he added, "He admires my verses." Patmore told me too that he had once asked Henry if he had read "The Angel" and the "Odes." Henry said, "No—and I don't want to." Patmore, rather piqued, said, "May I ask why?" to which he answered, "Because they would make me dissatisfied with my own work." However, the letters given below prove that Henry *had* read and appreciated his father's works. Nevertheless, I feel sure that Patmore judged correctly in holding that the great resemblance to them, both in thought and style, which is often to be detected in the son's verses, was in no degree due to imitation. Henry's poetry seems to me to be essentially original, and the similarity is, I think, solely due to heredity.

Some few characteristic stories of him seem worth recording. During all his childish years his health was so frail that it was thought necessary to keep him under the constant supervision of his step-mother or nurse, and he was never allowed to be out of sight of one or other. At a certain stage (probably when he was about ten years old) he felt that this *régime* was somewhat out of date, and determined to assert his independence. Accordingly, when all the family were in the hay-field and some one was reading aloud, he left them, merely saying, "Don't wait for me—I shall not be long," and walked off. He did not return for many hours, and every-one became extremely anxious. His father was just preparing to have the ponds dragged, when he met Henry returning, quite cool and collected, from a walk to Uckfield, whither he had been to buy some fish-hooks. His father pointed out to him what trouble and misery his absence had caused, and told him to have his supper and go to bed. He obeyed

without a murmur, evidently feeling that this was but a small penalty to pay for the successful assertion of his independence. His intention was thoroughly understood by his father, who thenceforward released him from an over-anxious control which he had obviously outgrown.

When he was about seventeen years old he went with his father to Manresa to make a "retreat," which was to last three whole days. The retreat-master, thinking that he needed some relief from the restraint and isolation, told him to go and amuse himself. He went accordingly to London and was seen by a lady who knew him eating ices at Verrey's. She went up to speak to him, but was at once told, "You must not speak to me, I am in retreat."

He took to smoking at a rather early age, to the disgust of his sisters, who discouraged the habit in every way. Walking with one of them one day, he suddenly asked, "Whose feast is it to-day?" She, greatly pleased that he should care to know, told him the name of the saint. "Then," said he, "I will smoke an extra pipe in his honour," and immediately proceeded to "light up."

I must be content with these slender memorials of one who, I confidently believe, might, had he lived, have won a distinguished place among contemporary poets. His inner and spiritual life was fully revealed to his few intimates alone, but the extracts from his poems, which I have printed below, indicate the character of a mind which in many respects so closely resembled his father's, while the few letters of his which remain give evidence of many of the qualities which his constitutional shyness concealed from all but a very few. The combination of schoolboy humour with a delicate sensitiveness for the feelings of others, such as is seldom found before complete maturity is reached, give these letters a peculiar charm which is

enhanced by the boyishness of the hand in which they are written. They are only less valuable as proof of the deep and unselfish, if somewhat over-anxious love which was consistently shown him by Mary Patmore.

There are many allusions to Henry in Patmore's letters, of which none gives the father's estimate of his son's character more eloquently than the following:

"Hastings,
"March 10, 1883.

"My Dear Gosse,

"Thank you for your very kind letter. You are among the few who are able to value rightly Henry's talents, and I have some little things in his hand which will give you the means of doing so more fully when I see you again, which I hope will be soon, for you are always welcome. But no one besides myself can know how sweet and great a character he had—the most manly, truthful, gentle, tender, humorous, reticent, affectionate, and religious I ever knew. He died without ever having brought a stain of impurity upon his conscience, and I feel prouder and gladder of his innocent, dutiful life than if he had been the greatest poet of the age.

"Yours very truly,
"C. Patmore."

This letter to Dr. Garnett gives Patmore's view of the relation of Henry's poems to his own:

"Hastings,
"June 4, 1884.

"My Dear Garnett,

"The characteristics of Henry's poems which have struck you have struck several others. But the resemblance of which you speak was no imitation. It was in his blood, I suppose. I do not know that he ever read my poetry. No word ever passed between us about it, except once, about a year before he died, when I asked him if he had ever read 'The Angel,' and he said 'No.' The only poets he seemed to care for were the Greek Tragedians and

Shakespeare; and of them he spoke with an intelligence and grave ardour which showed that his carelessness about the modern poets arose from no incapacity to understand them.

"Yours ever truly,
"C. PATMORE."

III.

Henry Patmore's poems are known to very few. The edition printed by Mr. Daniel was almost entirely exhausted among Patmore's friends. Nine of the poems are printed in the revised two-volume edition of "The Angel in the House" and "Unknown Eros." These may be considered to be sufficiently accessible, and I refrain therefore from reprinting them here, though they represent Henry Patmore at his best: I give a few which appear nowhere else than in the Oxford edition.

"APHRODITE.

"I love you, Florence, now not less
Than when I loved you first;
But, O, for that divine distress
When love, a tender rosebud, burst
Blushing upon the thorn,
And life was like a wilderness,
Full of wild flowers and full of thirst,
All waving to the dewless morn.
Then Aphrodite rose surf-born,
Unveiled and innocent of shame.
I knew her by another name,
And felt you personally dear
All mine for love, yourself for fear."

"ON A TREE IN A 'WILDERNESS.'

"From where I sit I often see
A certain tall, misshapen tree;
And, when the wind moans from the West,

It rocks much more than do the rest:
It tosses its unhappy head
Now this way, now that way instead,
Now tries to catch a passing cloud,
Now almost breaks with being bowed;
And all the others bow and nod,
And seem to think it wild and odd.
That ugly indecorous tree
I like, because it seems like me."

"SUMMER EVENING.

"I like the crowds of foolish feet
And empty heads that fill the street;
And well I know I may defy
A greater fool to come than I.
No bald head is so satisfied
With cynic sayings cut and dried:
No little child can love so much
A tinsel toy that breaks at touch."

"'Your tears are not like other tears.
'Yes, they are salt and hot,
And speak of little griefs and fears
Which well might be forgot.'
'Do you forget them, darling? I
Love you for being small;
Little the things which make you cry,
Big are the tears that fall,
And like the diamond-dew are clear;
But dew has got this fault,
This difference from your diamond tears
It is not hot and salt.'"

"BROCKENHURST BRIDGE.

"If I knew how to paint or draw,
I'd show you what it was I saw:
I see it now, and much too well
For clumsy words of mine to tell.
If only I could draw or paint,
I'd make some little likeness faint:

With shadowy lines I'd try to show
The arching bridge, and there below
The shallow stream that leaves half dry
The larger stones that in it lie.
I'd show the silence, paint the sound
The water makes in bubbling round
And over stones: I'd paint the stream,
Clear-flowing like a happy dream.
You'd see the bank's declining ledge,
The drooping brushwood on the edge.
But O, how should I dare to paint,
How hope for any likeness faint
Of her for whom the bridge is made,
The water and the brushwood shade?"

* * * *

Lest however a too rigid adherence to rule should cause injustice by giving such readers as may not refer to the reprinted poems an inadequate idea of Henry's faculty, I subjoin the following passage, which appears to me to be as good as anything he wrote:

"LAMENT

Of one who could go out only in a bath-chair, the doctor recommending the morning; but once, being out on a January afternoon, he felt some sadness at tasting a pleasure which he had almost forgotten.

* * * *

"Almost did I—oh sin—forget
The dim delight of the sunset;
The round sun lingering misty red,
Ere in the sea he sinks to bed;
The tremor and the blush upon
The sea, expecting the red sun;
The movements of that hour so still;
The sense that goes before the will,
And thoughts that heavy lag behind,
And bring the quiet to the mind;
And what delights the eye not least,
The gloom of the deserted east,
All empty of the glorious sun,

And darkness seen where morning shone.
The hill, that tip-toe did defy
With rugged head the early sky,
Now, in the gentle mist more great,
Leans down on earth with all its weight;
And here the old street slumbers deep,
And red-tiled cottages asleep
Look lazy, lost, and quieted
In drowsy dreams of ages dead.
And still the setting light is kind,
And somehow finds its way behind
To where the cottage children play,
Forgetful of the serious day,
And all with serious love intent
On strife that bursts in merriment.
Oh, listen to the noise that's made
Where those thick bushes make thick shade!
The birds have something they must say
Before the light is gone away."

* * * *

I have committed myself to the opinion that Henry Patmore would, had he lived, have made his mark as a poet. Such anticipatory judgments are notoriously fallible: very many young poets have shown brilliant promise which their future work has not fulfilled. It is therefore reasonable that I should explain why I consider his poems, in spite of obvious juvenilities, to have given unusual earnest of future success. They seem to me to conform to one of Coventry Patmore's favourite canons in this respect, that their "polish" is almost exclusively "internal." The best passages are written obviously without revision; and, as long as the impulse is sustained, their form is adequate: when the inspiration halts, the form deteriorates beyond recovery by correction. This characteristic seems to me to place Henry potentially in the higher rank of poets, and to indicate qualities which further knowledge and training

might have developed to poetical attainment of the most valuable kind.

IV.

Some of the nicknames and allusions which occur in the following letters call for elucidation. "Dear old (59) Fish" is Henry's stepmother, Mary Patmore. There had been some family "chaff" about her age, which she kept a secret. Henry makes a guess at it, which, if I am right in fixing the date of the letter, gives her five or six more years than she was entitled to claim. She is called "fish" because the age of fishes is a mystery. "Father Rickety" is Father Rickerby. "Weenie" is another sobriquet of his for his stepmother. "Hags" are his sisters, Bertha and Gertrude, the term being derived from Greek and English, and signifying "holy women." "Oins" is the nurse. "Obs" and "Obbie" are the present Mrs. Patmore, then Miss Robson. "Ma" is Gertrude Patmore. "Dicky" is Henry himself. In "Old Chapney" the present writer is forced (reluctantly) to recognise himself.

[Written from Manresa, 1876?]

"DEAR OLD (59) FISH,

"The butter is very good, praps they make it themselves. We had sardines at tea last night, cold beef this morn^g highish. Father Rickety gives your papa and I our retreats. Mine begins to-morrow, I do what I like to-day (Sunday) and come back with your papa (aged 72). Going to mortlake to hear a 2nd (ain't it dreadful) mass. Walk on Wimbledon Common in afternoon. . . . 5 p.m. Just come in from W. Common. Having my malt. All the novices are very gloomy. They're not allowed to read novels, and all the pictures of female saints in the house have beards added to them to make them less attractive. The elder Jesuits have to keep patrolling up and down all day to prevent the novices from escaping. Only one woman ever comes within the walls,—the laundress, *ætat* 64. Every

Written from Manresa

Dear old (59) fish,

The butter is very good, props they make it themselves. We had sar-
[illegible]
less attractive. They elder Jesuits have to keep patrolling up and down all day to prevent the novices from escaping. Only one woman ever comes within the walls, — the laundress, aetat. 64. Every Satur-

day, when she brings the linen, she receives on an average 5 proposals, besides innumerable billets all expressive of enthusiastic devotion on the part of the writers. all of them novices think her a perfect and blooming beauty, except such as, judging from the bearded female saints above mentioned, maintain that miss (outside called mrs) Juggins cant yet have reached maturity, since she lacks a beard. o Hence the good

Saturday, when she brings the linen, she receives, on an average, 5 proposals, besides innumerable billets, all expressive of enthusiastic devotion on the part of the writers. All of the novices think her a perfect and blooming beauty, except such as, judging from the bearded female saints above mentioned, maintain that miss (outside called Mrs.) Juggins can't yet have reached maturity, since she lacks a beard. Hence the good dame often receives a pot of bear's grease, accompanied by lines like these:

> 'Apply this ointment to thy dimpled face,
> And, when upon thy lips a tawny wreath
> Of fair moustaches blooms, with beard in place,
> Be mine, O loveliest blossom of the heath!'

She lives on Wimbledon Common, which, I suppose, is the 'heath' alluded to.

"Give hags my hate, and oins a kiss, and my cat a box of sardines.

"H. P."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"De. 12th, 1877,
"Wednesday, 4.30 p.m.

"My Dear Mama,

"I got your letter and the order on Tuesday. Thanks for both. I am afraid even Mr. Greenwood cannot foresee much good for my Turks now, can he? Poor Osman. To think that Czarewiches and Gourkos and Princes Charles have got him. But it's a comfort to think that he always beat them in the field, and that they had to bring their Todleben to starve him out.

"I hope England will soon be taught that honour and expediency go together. It would be rather fun if Lord Derby had to go to war after all; then, perhaps, he would prefer having fought while there were Turks to fight with him, and would find it harder to make Russia give up what she had taken than it would have been to prevent her taking it.

"My sympathies are with Russia now, as opposed to England. I hope she annihilates the Turks (for I'd rather my Turks be done for now whilst covered with honour than live on subject to Russia) and gets exactly what she

wants in the peace. I hope Germany encourages her, and England is left to stand by herself, as Turkey was. However, it doesn't matter to me what happens.

"It is much more to the point to ask you to thank our Lady with me for a great favour I have got from her, and now and then to join me in praying to her for one or two things that I want.

"Is Mrs. Jackson still able to walk about?

"Give my love to Papa and Oins.

"Your loving son,
"HARRY.

"P.S.—If Obby is with you, give her my love, too."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"Jan. 2nd, 1878,
"Wednesday.

"MY DEAR MAMA,

"Do not I make lovely 'M's'? Nevertheless, as I am in a hurry, I hope you will excuse bad penmanship. We have such a delicious crib, but I will not attempt to describe it. It is all life size and there is such a delicious cow lying down looking so contented and happy; and our Lady looks so angelically happy, and our Lord so lovingly divine, as if rejoicing that he is only a tiny baby.

"What a wonder it is we can think of anything else when we believe this; and it seems to go against the grain to think of it.

"Your loving HENRY."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"Jan., 1878,
"Tuesday, 11 a.m.

"MY DEAR MAMA,

"I will begin by telling you that I am very happy. I have been happier during the last two or three months than ever before, I think, I suppose because I have been trying to be gooder.

"Another thing that conduces a great deal to my happiness is that my bump of poetry is developing rapidly; I do not mean the bump of writing poetry, for I know that to write poetry is not my vocation. I might write like Longfellow or some of those second-rate poets, who, Papa says, aren't poets. But I'd rather not, even if I could.

For now that my poetical bump is developing, poetry seems to me the noblest and greatest thing, after religion, on earth; and it seems a horrid profanation to have so many books of pretty rhymes with red backs and gilt edges every day published, calling themselves poetry, criticized in newspapers as poetry, and, I suppose, owe their reputation as much to their red backs and gilt edges as to anything else. My muse might soar as high as this, but she could never inspire me with any real poetry; so she shall be dumb. But what I mean by the development of my poetic bump, is that I can now see the poetry in Milton, Wordsworth, Papa, and Dante (even Dante!) as I never could till quite lately; and I really think that being able to enjoy poetry is a new source of happiness added to my life. I was reading the 'Angel in the House' this morning (for the first time), and I enjoyed it very much.

"But, as somebody said of Wordsworth, 'I' seems the only pronoun in my vocabulary.

"How is every one? Do Oiney's and your heads ache much now?

"Are the English going to war? What does the 'Pall Mall' say about things now? I should think it must be rather disgusted and angry with all the world, is it not?

"I must now say goodbye and with love to Ma; for I have not written to her for some time.

"Your loving son,
"HENRY."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"Feb. 15th, /78.
"Thursday, 11.45 a.m.

"MY DEAR MAMA,

"On Tuesday I was very rich. I got letters from you, Papa, and Gertrude. Papa is beginning to write regularly and often to me now, I hope he will go on. I am just at the end of Dr. Newman's 'Apologia,' it is a delicious book. I did not think that such a noble and good creature could exist on this earth. It is quite sickening, after reading this 'Apologia,' to turn to those around me and to myself, and see how very frivolous and aimless and selfish our lives are; how we go on living from day to day *for* the day, as if we were animals put here to make the best of our time, and then 'go off the hooks' to make way for others.

Of course grown up people often live for God, but I think nearly all my 'compeers' here (myself included) are animals. I think I must be a MONK; I have been thinking so for a month, and the thought seems to me to come from God. But I must not be in a hurry, I will wait and pray, as Dr. Newman did, and light will come, as it came to him. My confessor thinks it is my vocation very likely. I wonder what order would do for me.

"It is dreadfully hard to be good. This life doesn't seem to be meant for goodness. But I begin to see that I can't be happy unless good, and though there is a great deal to discourage me in the ascent, there is not a little to encourage. The worst of it is that I sometimes feel so very animalish; but, whatever happens, the Imitation of Christ is like the voice of God himself telling me what to do. Pray for me, and pray that I may be a monk, and, if possible, a priest. For I cannot ever be really happy, I think, except as a monk. But all this may be a passing dream.

"I hope England is dragged into war, don't you; and I don't feel as if I could care much if she was beaten.

"I must now devote some time to the perusing of the exploits of the ancient Romans, and then I shall finish the 'Apologia.'

"Your loving son,
"HARRY."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"Feb. 14th, 1878,
"Thursday, 8 p.m.

"MY DEAR PAPA,

"Thank you very much for your long letter, which I got the day before yesterday.

* * * * * *

"Though Gertrude tells me you have given up politics in despair, will you answer one or two political questions? Do you think all England's glory and greatness is gone? And is her want of honourableness now in any way due to the Reform Bills? But I suppose that can't be, since it is not Parliament so much as the nation that has degenerated. 3. What do you think of Lord Beaconsfield and of Lord Derby?

"Since I began this letter I have read the first book of 'Paradise Lost.' I can now see ten times more beauty in it than I ever could before.

"I don't know what to think of poetry, whether to think it is all empty sham or that it is a relic of man's greatness left after the Fall. For it makes you feel so elevated for the moment, and then you see it was all an illusion, and fall back into unpoetical reality or unreality, whichever it is ——I must stop, for the clock is striking ten.

"Your loving son,
"HENRY JOHN."

"Ushaw, Durham,
"May 18th, 1878,
"Saturday, 12.

"MY DEAR MAMA,

"The Bishop called me up this morning, and told me that you had written to ask him if some one from the college could go up with me to London for my examination. He asked me what I thought of it, and when I told him, he said I had better write and tell you all I thought and felt about it, and he would write and tell you in short about our interview.

"I know, dear Weenie, that this plan is the result of careful and kind thought, and I am afraid it will hurt you to hear I don't like it. But I will tell you why, and I think we (for in this Dicky's voice ought to have weight; for Dicky is 18 and, if he has not experience of the world in London, he knows all about the world here, and all about the examination) shall be able to change the plan so as to satisfy us both. I will tell you exactly what I feel. I am ashamed to be taken up to London and looked after when there by someone from here. All the college would laugh at me, as well as the person who went with me, and I am sure I should be miserable for weeks before and during the examination week (for, believe me, the person who went down with me would not like the task at all, and imagine how wretched it would be to live alone for a week with a person who would rather not be with me and would regard me as a great nuisance and a big baby), and it would be a sore point and a laugh against me to all here when I came back. Of course the answer to all this is that

my objection is all sentiment or fancy and that the reason for someone going from here with me is a solid fact, to which sentiment ought to yield, viz. that I could not look after myself, and that the only practicable way of getting anyone to look after me is to get someone from here. But I think that, after all, facts ought if possible to be made to yield to feeling. For facts are only material *things* and *feelings* are a part of our souls. Feelings remain, and, though they may be crushed, the pain of the crushing remains as a *fact*. Facts being things external to us, we can't always be sure how far they are true, or which way they really bear, and I hope to be able to make you think with me that the facts, in this case, are not altogether true, and that, even where they are, they are (I think) arguments for my side. If I cannot look after myself, I must learn sometime, and this is a good chance. For, after all, there would be very little danger in my living in a little room in London by myself and driving in an omnibus every-day to the examination house, and coming back at night and sleeping in my little room. You may say, 'How shall I find my way by myself to my lodgings to begin with, how shall I manage to get on in lodgings by myself, to find my omnibus each morning, to find my way back each night?' But are not these just the things I *must* learn to do for myself some day, and surely 18 is not too young to begin? May it not be more prudent to expose me to the danger of making little mistakes now than to leave me without the experience I might now gain to fall an easy prey to great mistakes hereafter?

"There cannot be any real danger in leaving me alone in London in lodgings at 18 years old. Want of physical strength will not really make me likely to be murdered or robbed, will it? And whatever carefullness can do to save me from danger, physical or moral, that I promise conscientiously and self-denyingly to do.

"But if I cannot live by myself, could not Mrs. Garnett or someone else have me, or could not Oiney or someone come up to London?

"Seeing me use the word 'self-denyingly' a few lines ago, perhaps you will say that my self-denial does not show in a very bright light when I am so unwilling to deny myself in the subject I am writing about. But, if you still want me to I will 'with all my will but much against my

heart.'[1] But do remember it is no light thing, especially for me so deficient in moral courage as I am, and above all in a school or college like this, to bear what makes him the object of a sort of silent laughter and contempt to all, and will leave in him a wound ready to pain him at a word or hint dropped.

"If you think that it would be better for the examination itself that someone from here should be with me, I can quite understand your thinking so; but let me say, dear Weenie, that this is a thing that I can see in a truer and a stronger light than you, because I can realize the situation better; and I am sure that it could not really help me at all, and would, taking other things before mentioned into consideration, be rather a hindrance.

"As to the heat or the air affecting my health and so making assistance necessary, though it is true that this might happen; still, in the first place, if it made me very ill (which, I suppose is very unlikely), I could not do my examination anyhow; and if it made me headachy or anything of the sort, I should get more help from my only care if alone, than from the care of a person sorry to be with me.

"Besides, there are *two* examinations, one some weeks after the other, and the person who brought me from here to the first could not, most likely, without great inconvenience to himself do the same for the second.

"But even if these difficulties can be cleared away, do try and get some (*any*) other expedient for the love of our Lady and of

"Your loving Son,
"HENRY."

"P.S. I should not have been in time to send this off today, if I had written it carefully, so please pardon the scribbling."

Mary Patmore yielded to Henry's wish, and, with her usual unselfishness, arranged to take lodgings in London and receive him there for the examination.

[1] Quotation from Patmore's Ode, "A Farewell."

"Thursday,
"12.30 p.m.

"DEAR OBS,

"Old Chapney didn't get a chance of forming any opinion of Anthusa,[1] as he fortunately went off 5 minutes after the MS. came on Monday morning. . . . Well, as I was saying, Obs, I went to church this morning. There were about 20 people there, mass was to be at ¼ to 8. We waited, and by 8 o'clock we began to think the parish priest was less punctual even than usual, about 8.15 the parish priest took the trouble to send word that he wasn't going to get up this morning. Lorks! What things parish priests are!

"H. P."

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[1] The Grecian love tale mentioned by Gertrude Patmore, p. 295.

CHAPTER XXII

LATER PROSE WRITINGS

THE end of the year 1875 found Patmore established at the Mansion, Hastings, the very house which it had been the dream of his childhood some day to occupy. The first few years of his residence were spent in completing the Odes, in writing "Amelia," and in revising and selecting from his earlier poems. The publication in 1878 of a complete edition of his poems may be said to have ended his poetical career, though he spent considerable time in further revision for later issues, and wrote some few more verses, of which but a small proportion were published. While other homes of his have an equal claim to rank as the scenes of his poetic labours, it was at Hastings that he commenced and in a great measure completed his later prose writings, which to many are of scarcely less interest than his poetry.

There was one prose work of Patmore's, destined never to see the light, to which he had devoted special care and labour. The "Sponsa Dei," a treatise of no great length, is admitted by all who saw it in manuscript to have been brought to the highest standard of literary perfection, while it expressed in greater fulness than any other work of his, either in verse or prose, the idea which is the main inspiration of all his writing. Its history is in a special degree illustrative of Patmore's thought and character.

By about 1878 the poetic impulse had ceased, and

Patmore had convinced himself that he had worked out the entire vein of such of his thought as could be expressed in verse. When, not much later, he turned his attention to prose, there could be little doubt what subject would be the first to claim his attention. I have shown that from boyhood the idea of nuptial love had been the main inspiration of his poetry, that the events of his life and the development of his thought had confirmed him in this choice, and had led him to impart to each successive phase of his work more and more ideality, whereby human love came to be increasingly symbolical of Love Divine. "The relation of the soul to Christ *as his betrothed wife*," which had, in comparatively early years, presented itself to him as "a mine of undiscovered joy and power" (p. 146), had in the course of years taken complete possession of his imagination. Later he speaks of this same symbol as the "*burning heart of the universe*" (vol. ii., p. 67).

It was characteristic of Patmore that his thought should be related to one central idea, and that the closer his approach to it the greater should be the fervour of his inspiration, which naturally expressed itself in increased pregnancy and perfection of language. He was not wont to modify his conceptions or to adapt them to any conventional standard, but developed them fully and fearlessly and expressed them with emphasis. If he ever condescended to think what reception his readers were likely to accord to his work, he must have trusted that the obvious sincerity of his conviction, the candour of his self-expression, and the refining influence of a passionate idealism would carry him through difficulties which might be fatal to more guarded or hesitating utterance. He could scarcely however have been altogether unconscious that in pursuing this theme he was, as it were, walking on a razor's edge.

The ideal light in which his chosen subject presented itself to his imagination served to transfigure all its accidents; and this involved a risk of carrying his analogy beyond due bounds. Even in his earlier work some such tendency had been apparent; and the same danger necessarily became more grave in proportion to the elevation of his theme. It is evident that to some of the poet's friends a few of the later odes had appeared to carry to excess this analogy between human and Divine love. Mr. de Vere for example had, in a letter which is printed in vol. ii., strongly urged the suppression of the group of odes, "Eros and Psyche," "Psyche's Discontent" and "De Natura Deorum." Others of Patmore's admirers had ridiculed Mr. de Vere's scruples; but it is clear that the question at issue did at the time of publication and must in the future separate the readers of the odes into two camps. It cannot be denied that, to some, the expression of Divine in terms of human love becomes distasteful so soon as it passes beyond general and somewhat vague suggestion: the extent to which it is acceptable to others in its more intimate development must vary according to individual idiosyncrasy. To Patmore however this symbol was not only of vital moment but had, as he believed, the full endorsement of the Church,—a view which the natural tendency to assimilate what was most consonant to his own intuitions would necessarily confirm. He indeed believed himself to be merely resuscitating orthodox mystic doctrine which had been neglected, or, to use his own felicitous application of a scriptural phrase, to be "digging again the wells which the Philistines had filled." It is needless, even if it were possible, to judge precisely how far he was justified in this contention. Certainly many passages in the Bible suggest the analogy, though in very general terms:

not a few Catholic Saints and mystic writers, notably Saint Theresa, emphasize and develop the same idea; while the headings to the Canticles in the Douay and English Bibles, which probably reflect a mediæval interpretation, endorse the metaphor in a very advanced form. Patmore certainly had considerable justification for holding that his view was supported by adequate authority.

As regards the immediate subject: in the "Sponsa Dei" Patmore had carried this symbol into fuller detail than in any of his other work either in verse or prose; and, as it contained the most intimate expression of his most inspiring thought, had imparted to it an unusual charm and distinction of style. It had never been his intention to publish it during his life-time, but he had given instructions for its issue after his death. Towards the end of 1887 he decided to destroy it. He had shown it to his friend Father Gerard Hopkins, S.J., who returned it to him with the remark, "that's telling secrets." Some other friends had advised its suppression on grounds of ordinary prudence. Patmore, in a letter to Robert Bridges, relates that Father Hopkins's remark had instantly decided him to destroy the work. Father Hopkins however, in a letter to Patmore, shows that he had not intended his words to be taken so seriously, and regrets their consequences.

It is at this distance of time difficult to give a personal opinion as to the necessity or wisdom of Patmore's decision. It was a frequent experience with his friends to feel nervous about the publication of much of the work which he showed them in manuscript, and to find themselves agreeably disappointed at the respectful reception which it won. Whether it was that thoughts which seemed so startingly opposed to the tendencies of the day were floated into favour on a wave of reaction against

popular materialism, or that the obvious sincerity, profound conviction, and elevated purity, which his manner of expression implied, gained for him appreciation even where there was no approach to assent,—certain it is that I and others of his friends were frequently cheated of our timorous anticipations, and convinced that, in fearlessly obeying his own instinct, Patmore had shown a wisdom above mere prudence.

Though "Sponsa Dei," as a complete work, thus came to an untimely end, I cannot believe that it has wholly perished. Of Patmore's published prose that which approaches it most nearly is the essay "Dieu et Ma Dame," which no doubt owes something to the lost work: so too do "The Precursor" and "The Bow Set in the Cloud"; and it is also probable that some of the fragments given in vol. ii., c. v., are portions of the "Sponsa Dei"; but such identification is and must remain conjectural.

If the flower of Patmore's prose work was thus sacrificed to a scruple, enough remains to secure him a distinguished place among the essay-writers of our time. Towards the end of 1884 he was definitely launched on the new career, which was continued more or less intermittently until 1895, in which year his third and last volume, "Rod, Root and Flower," was issued. It is mainly to his association with Mr. Greenwood, which originated in a close sympathy, literary, political, and personal, that the later prose writings are due. As I have related (p. 246), many of the Odes and some other of Patmore's poems had, in 1875, 1876, and 1877, appeared in the "Pall Mall Gazette," then edited by Mr. Greenwood. Patmore regarded this paper as "the only one fit for a gentleman," and found in it an accurate presentment of his own political principles. In 1884 he was stirred to patriotic indignation by Mr. Gladstone's attempt to

dissociate reform of the franchise from re-distribution of seats, and finding that the "St. James's Gazette," which Mr. Greenwood was then editing, took a similar view of the situation, wrote to him as follows:

"Hastings, July 20, 1884.

"DEAR MR. GREENWOOD,

"Who so fit as yourself to initiate the combinations which you advise for the preservation of the National life and of all that is dearest to good men?

"A saturated solution will sometimes crystallize and solidify suddenly if any solid particle is cast into it. Can I do anything towards forwarding the chance of energizing the public will?

"I am by no means a rich man; but I am willing to bind myself to contribute a thousand pounds towards raising a really practical opposition to the ministerial treason, and, if necessary, 'meeting force by force.' If I could further assist by acting as a sort of secretary or intermediary, or in any other way with you, nothing would make me so happy as to leave my retirement and to live in London for the next few months and act wholly under your direction.

"You would not, I believe, find me afraid of labour, or of any inconvenience that might arise. . . . . .

"Yours very truly,

"COVENTRY PATMORE."

Mr. Greenwood replied as follows:

"Whitefriars, July 22, 1884.

"DEAR MR. PATMORE,

"One or two such patriots as you ought to save us from the fate of Sodom; and I verily believe that there are others too. Yours is a magnificent offer. At present I've not got very far with the notion you have taken up so warmly, but I shall see one or two good men this evening, and again on Thursday; and if once the thing is started it would go on well, I do not doubt for a moment. Meanwhile, the leaders of the party do not seem very keen for counter-demonstration—Sir Stafford certainly is not;—very unfortunate is the want of concert and energy among them,

but that is all the more reason, perhaps, why men who are not professional politicians should move. . . . . .

"Believe me, truly yours,
"F. GREENWOOD."

A few days later Patmore writes again, offering a further contribution for the purpose of placarding a speech of Mr. Bright's about the injustice of severing enfranchisement from re-distribution.

These transactions served to strengthen the alliance between Patmore and the editor of the "St. James's," who, not much later, endeavoured to secure him as a regular contributor to the paper. But before passing to the general consideration of Patmore's prose writings, the bulk of which originated in this connection, it may be well to say something of his attitude in practical politics.

His position in such matters, that of an uncompromising pessimist, on which I have dwelt elsewhere, and which is clearly expressed in many of the Odes, might have been thought likely to exclude any endeavour to set things right: where there was no hope for the future, it might well be supposed that there was no use in present effort. It is probably due to some such reasoning that Patmore has been accused of doing nothing towards ameliorating conditions of which he so clearly saw the defects. His action however was not thus bound by the logic of his opinions, which moreover, as was characteristic of him, were expressed with something more than due emphasis. In point of fact, on such occasions as stirred his patriotism, he was energetic in action, and ready to assist with his pen and purse as well as by verbal advocacy the course which seemed to him to be urgent. I have already related (pp. 71-75), how he had in 1852 been instrumental in starting a volunteer movement, the story of which he recapitulates, in a letter to Mr. Greenwood concerning the

crisis of 1884, as an example of what may be achieved by prompt action of a practical kind. In 1886 he was no less eager in opposition to Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule scheme. I well remember the intensity of his indignation at the proposal, and how urgent he was that all his friends should exert their personal influence against the measure, but can find no allusion to it in his correspondence, nor any published writing of his which bears on the question, unless it be an article which appeared in the "St. James's" for Dec. 29, 1885, when Mr. Gladstone's intention was anticipated but not yet proclaimed. This, which was entitled "How to Govern Lady-like Races," is eminently characteristic of Patmore's thought.

In 1888 the British Navy was, compared to the sea-power of other nations, perilously inadequate: the expenditure on it had reached the lowest ebb, and public opinion was beginning to awake to the insecurity which such a condition involved. Patmore wrote the following letter to the "St. James's Gazette" (March 12, 1888):

"THE REVANCHE, SEDAN OR WATERLOO?

"*To the* EDITOR *of the* ST. JAMES'S GAZETTE.

"SIR,—At a time when our terrible shortcomings in the means of national defence are at last awakening serious popular concern, you will perhaps allow me to indicate a danger which, though it seems obvious, has never yet, as far as I am aware, been insisted upon. It is that the humiliation of France by the German victories may be revenged upon *us*. It is not an injustice that the whole French nation is burning to punish, but loss of prestige which it is raging to recover; and this might be recovered just as well by beating us, who are vulnerable, as by beating the Germans, which the French are beginning to see there is little chance of their being able to do. In their present state of feeling, 'à Londres' and 'Plus d'Angleterre' might in a moment become war-cries which would be fully as

infuriating as 'à Berlin' and 'Alsace-Lorraine;' and a hint from a Government which declared itself to be at last prepared for the achievement of a signal retaliation would make all Frenchmen forget Sedan to remember Waterloo. The French just now have no particular reason for hating us; but their condition of mind towards us shows that they do not require any particular reason, unless it be reason enough that it is centuries since we have bitten the dust as they have now been compelled to do.

"France has of late years shown a wonderful power of reticence. The whole nation has, by tacit consent, pushed on its portentous military preparations with as much silence as possible, so as to give Germany no unnecessary and premature offence. But, side by side with these, she has likewise been making, with as much silence as possible, naval preparations scarcely less portentous—against whom?

"We are out of that great league of mutual protection which we might have joined, and might still join, if we would; and it would be too much to ask of Prince Bismarck, in a crisis of national life or death, to refuse to look on without interference at an enterprise against us which might leave him free to grapple with Russia, and which he might with good reason believe would end in permanently assuaging the lust of France for her *revanche* against his own country. We shall have no one in the world but ourselves to look to if, in the twinkling of an eye and upon some very slight excuse, the purpose of the French naval preparations should become apparent, and the enormous military power which we have unconcernedly seen growing should be turned against us.

"Although this peril has not, as far as I know, been put plainly before the English people, their very reasonable uneasiness at the present moment is, no doubt, owing to its being obvious; perhaps some may think too obvious and too probable for it to be talked about without imprudence and risk of putting things into the heads of our neighbours. But we may be quite sure that all our weakness and France's possible opportunities are in their heads already, and that it is into our own heads that such things require to be put clearly. If we did not all know that it was the way of Governments to be often ignorant of what is the strongest feeling in the nation, it would seem incredible that our present Ministry should remain insensible to the fact that,

as an electioneering dodge, they could not do better at the present moment than demand a credit of such magnitude as would prove that something effectual in the way of national defence was really meant. But they still believe in the utterly obsolete dodge of 'economy' in these matters, and are actually reducing our naval expenditure by nearly one million just when France has quietly voted six millions to be spent in additional means of meeting us on the sea.

"I am, Sir,

"your obedient servant,

"C. P.

"March 12, 1888."

About this letter he writes later:

"Greenwood tells me that my letter in the St. James's Gazette, headed 'The Revanche, Sedan or Waterloo?' made a great impression in the highest political places: he heard it gravely discussed at Hatfield, and considers that it was the very beginning of that serious consideration of what the French might be really looking forward to which ended in the voting of twenty millions extra for the new ships—the very sum I named in my letter."

The letter however does not mention the amount which it was needful to expend.

These appear to be the most important occasions on which Patmore brought his influence to bear on an actual crisis; but a further portion of his contributions to the "St. James's" is concerned with more abstract political principles, in which articles he consistently advocates a policy of courage and patriotism, and deprecates the short-sighted selfishness which, in his opinion, the enfranchisement of the lower classes was bound to inaugurate.

In all his writings which bear on politics, whether in prose or verse, Patmore shows himself a somewhat pessimistic Tory, and his work must therefore, from the point of view of party, prove palatable or distasteful according to the views of the reader. Considering it from a purely literary stand-point, I hold

that he has expressed himself on such questions more felicitously in prose than in poetry, and has shown that, for him at least, verse was not the best medium for presenting political ideas. The question how and in what precise form politics may become legitimate material for poetry is too intricate for discussion here. Patmore assuredly had many endowments which on *a priori* grounds might be held to qualify him for success as a political poet,—the faculty of seeing matters in their wider bearings and of referring them to general principles, a perfect sincerity of conviction, and an imaginative power which inspired impassioned utterance. Moreover the political adversary is to him no mere opponent, but the advocate of opinions which are subversive of Divine law. To him, as to the Psalmist or the Prophet, his antagonists are not so much personal or party foes as the enemies of God; nor is any restraint necessary to human condemnation, which can be but a feeble echo of the Divine. But granting all this, and putting aside some few passages which, on grounds of fair play, appear to me to be unworthy of him, I am still of opinion that, in his poems, the nearer the approach to actual politics whether religious or secular, the less satisfactory, on literary grounds, is the outcome likely to appear. It is possible indeed that this very exaltation may be unsuitable to a subject which is usually discussed on a lower level of thought. Patmore has said concerning writers of religious verse, "haply 'tis they screw the pitch too high," and it is conceivable that the conjecture should be applied to his own political poetry.

In his prose writings on political subjects I detect no similar failure in form. Doubtless the tone of a pronounced authoritarian will give offence to many; but, as a condition of good writing, this attitude appears to have been advantageous to him, and is

perhaps, more practically effective than an affectation of impartiality, which in any case would have been impossible to one of his temperament.

Mr. Greenwood, who had found himself in such strong sympathy with Patmore on many questions, saw the chance of enlisting for his paper a contributor of exceptional faculty. He writes to him:

"Dec. 29 [1884?]

"My Dear Patmore,

"Next year I want to bring out as many articles as I can from 'eminent hands.' Will you, then, take thought again to provide a little series or so that I may brag about?

"My aim is to get at least a dozen men of some sort of distinction—(various of course)—to keep the pot boiling pretty constantly with a spark of sacred fire. But about this, please say nothing at present.

"Yours very truly,

"F. Greenwood."

Patmore embarked on this new occupation with zest and enthusiasm. The conditions of his work were entirely different from those under which he had written in earlier days. He was no longer driven to write for money, was allowed free choice of subject, and was in close sympathy with his editor, who soon came to rank among his most intimate friends. The influence of this change of circumstance is evident in his work: there is no longer any note of perfunctory labour, and the advantage gained by the literary training and accumulation of thought which the intervening years had brought, is apparent in matter and style. Moreover he had abundant reasons for knowing that his work, though anonymous, was duly valued by the reading public as well as by the editor. This it certainly was. I remember that a lady of high literary attainments showed me, when Patmore's earlier contributions were appearing, cuttings she had kept of articles which had struck her as

being of exceptional merit. These, as I was able to inform her, were all from Patmore's pen. Patmore wrote to Mr. Greenwood to tell him how happy he felt in the work he was doing for him, and received the following reply:

"Whitefriars, Dec. 27 [1885 or 1886].

"My Dear Patmore,

"I think I know what the source of your pleasure is, in writing for the 'St. James's.' It is the consciousness, more or less acknowledged, that your work *tells*. This it certainly does; and it is my pride in the paper that no good article—no really good one—ever did or ever does appear in it, without full effect—I mean, of course, where it was meant to have effect, and where effect is of practical value. My praise (whatever it may be worth), is the praise of him who eats the pudding, and sees how it is relished. I do not remember any article of yours of which I did not hear afterwards in one way or another; and that is the gratification you give the editor, over and above the private and personal enjoyment of good work, and the satisfaction of working with good men. Then there is the blessed concordance of taste, of aims, and a common love of freedom, even like that of the wild ass when certain things and persons seek to put the halter on. This explains it to my mind: it is a pleasant explanation, any way.

"Yours very truly,
"F. Greenwood."

The "wild ass" however is not the only creature whom it may prove difficult to harness. Though Mr. Greenwood's yoke was of the lightest and thoughtfully adapted to the Pegasus who was of his team, some restraint and guidance was occasionally needed. The authoritarianism which was too essential to be modified by any considerations of prudence, and the mysticism which soared above the comprehension of the ordinary reader, were qualities which it must occasionally have been hard to bring into line even with the most advanced standard of journalism.

Occasionally the editor headed an article of Patmore's with a conciliatory note; as, for instance, in the case of one entitled "Why women are dissatisfied," to which the following is prefixed:

"What follows is a remarkable paper, which some of its readers will think very shocking and even outrageous; though in fact it proceeds from one of the kindliest as well as one of the firmest, keenest, and most subtle minds of the day."

The following letters give evidence of the tact with which the editor kept his contributor in check, and of the generosity which accepted the restraint without resentment.

"Whitefriars, Jan. 9.

"My Dear Patmore,

"Your letter shows once more a very generous spirit. The truth is, that it *does* take a little time to get into the tactics of newspaper writing on controversial subjects, but "it comes." Here is your article on 'Inequality.' It is all perfectly true, with nothing in excess: and yet you don't know what offence it would give in its straightforward, cool assumption that every body knows that you are right who knows anything of the matter. So they do. But the truth itself is hateful to thousands and tens of thousands. . . . .

"I do sincerely thank you for your forbearance.

"Thine,

"F. G."

"Whitefriars, Jan. 27, 11 p. m.

"My Dear Patmore,

". . . . And now to my pain and grief I must confess to you that I fear you may over-metaphysic our poor readers if you write such papers as these four, the 'Seer,' and the two later ones. Believe me, there arn't two in ten who can appreciate your subtleties, or dive deep enough in your thought without floundering. Some of them can—a few—and to them your articles will be as 'nuts.' As for the rest—you know that what a man feels he can't understand he thinks he has a right to be offended with. Pity a poor devil

of an Editor who has to take such people into serious account. But that is my unavoidable fate. . . . .

"Truly yours
"F. GREENWOOD."

If as a writer for the press Patmore had the defects of his qualities, the latter were fully recognized and appreciated by the Editor, who writes to him:

"Of course the poet is wanted for such work as you have been doing for us lately; this is where he comes in as 'Seer'; a name for him however which in a general way I don't like at all."

Patmore's association with the "St. James's" was happily maintained to the end of Mr. Greenwood's editorship. When this terminated, Patmore was the first to whom he communicated his project of starting a new paper. He writes to him:

"I have all but absolutely made up my mind to start a new Review . . . . If so, you know what will ensue so far as you are concerned. You will be asked to give your very best help; and I feel sure beforehand that it will not be denied. . . . You are the first person to be told of this out of the house here, as you may suppose."

There seems to have been some humorous discussion between them as to the title of the new periodical. Patmore writes to Mr. John Dennis (April 24, 1891):

"I had doubts about the title of the 'Anti-Jacobin,' and suggested two alternative names, 'Under the Greenwood Tree' and the 'Twopenny Damn,' the last expressing admirably, as I thought, the general purport of the enterprise. But Greenwood was deaf to my advice. I have written nothing since the first three numbers but a little article called "Simplicity."

About the same time he wrote to me:

"I have been trying to write for Greenwood; but I feel that what I do is out of keeping with his paper and with the world's sympathies generally. So I shall drop that."

From this date Patmore wrote little for the press —nothing in fact of importance except his appreciations of Francis Thompson and Mrs. Meynell, both of which appeared in the "Fortnightly Review." But during these years 1885-91 he had contributed upwards of a hundred and twenty articles to the "St. James's Gazette." These cover a very wide range of subject; Religion, Philosophy, Politics, Art (especially Architecture), Literature, the Management of Landed Property, Landscape, Jewels, Market Prices. Patmore gathered together what he considered the best and most important of these into four volumes. Eight articles entitled "How I Managed and Improved my Estate" (see c. xv.), were re-published as a little volume in 1886, and the following year he reprinted some further articles in a book called "The Sussex Marshes." In 1889 he issued "Principle in Art," a collection of essays philosophical and critical, almost all of which had appeared in the "St. James's Gazette;" and this was followed in 1893 by a second series entitled "Religio Poetæ." This volume, as the name implies, is mainly devoted to religion, though it includes some few essays on more general subjects. It contains one, that on "Madame de Hautefort," which was written at a much earlier period. (See note p. 110.) The contents of these two volumes were, after Patmore's death, rearranged to correspond more strictly as to subject with the titles of the several volumes, and were republished with some slight corrections and omissions.[1] In 1895 Patmore published a volume of aphorisms and essayettes, almost exclusively on religious subjects, under the title of "Rod, Root and Flower."

The only other prose work of his belonging to this later period was a life of Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall) which was published in 1877, from

[1] See preface to edition of 1898.

which I have given an extract on p. 34. Concerning this Patmore writes:

"Mrs. Procter insisted so strenuously upon my writing the life and editing the remains of her husband that I could not refuse, though it was a task little suited to me. I was never really intimate with Procter, though I had known him many years; and though I admired his simple, sincere and reticent character, I cared little for his poetry."

This work, though, as Patmore records, it gave satisfaction to Mrs. Procter and her friends, is not altogether free from the perfunctory quality which might have been anticipated for it. The two smaller and slighter works, "How I improved my Estate," and the "Sussex Marshes," are well written and thoroughly readable, but deal with subjects which scarcely give scope for the strongest elements of his prose. The three volumes, "Principle in Art," "Religio Poetæ," and "Rod, Root, and Flower," are those by which his power may best be tested; and of the three, though there is little to choose between them, the second, in my own opinion, shows Patmore at his best. Of his style I have written elsewhere that it is

"specially direct, masculine, and free from artifice. It is the matter of which the reader is first made conscious, and it is mainly by the vivid impression produced, by realizing with what apparent ease thoughts hard to express are made clear, that he becomes aware of the excellence of the manner. In this respect Patmore's prose writing is, as it seems to me, of a different and more excellent kind than that of the majority of the more notable writers of the present day, with so many of whom style is the first aim and the phrase apparently of more importance than the thought. But both in his later poetry and in his prose work the form is indissolubly wedded to the thought, and the union of the two displays that 'inevitable' quality which is one of the principal notes of first-rate art."

To this I may add a letter from Mr. Greenwood

to Patmore, who appears to have claimed admiration for a prose work, written in a more self-conscious manner, in which however Patmore thought he detected a resemblance to his own prose :

"My Dear Patmore,

". . . I don't even see a likeness to the simple, deep-flowing lucidity and serenity of C. P.'s essay-compositions —which were *not composed.*

"Ever truly yours,

"F. Greenwood."

None of Patmore's later work either in verse or prose was calculated to appeal to a wide public. Nevertheless these three volumes were received with warm admiration by competent judges. He was always grateful for intelligent recognition ; inclined also to wonder at any popular appreciation of his work.

To a reviewer of the "Religio Poetæ" he writes :

"Lymington, July 23, 1893.

"My Dear ——,

"This is by far the most careful and capable review I have ever had. A thousand thanks for it. Two thirds of an edition of 750 were disposed of before the volume had been out three weeks. Is not that strange, considering how insolently 'unpopular' are all its contents?

"I suppose people like being damned. . . .

"Yours ever truly,

"Coventry Patmore."

Patmore was, I think, fully satisfied with the success of these works, for which he never anticipated a very extensive sale. In a preface to "Rod, Root, and Flower" he writes :

"The readers from whom alone I expect a full and hearty, though silent, welcome, are those literary persons who, I am sincerely glad to see, find my writing, as Fuseli said of Blake, 'D—d good to steal from.'"

It is certain that the influence of these books

COVENTRY PATMORE.

From a photograph by G. Bradshaw, 1886.

was far wider than might have been anticipated from their limited circulation; and it is a common experience with those who know them well to find the thought conveyed in them doing duty under a thin disguise as the material for original "copy."

CHAPTER XXIII

LATER LIFE

FROM the time of his removal to Hastings in 1875 until his death in 1896, Patmore's life was comparatively uneventful. I have already dealt with the literary outcome of this period (the final instalment of the Odes and the later prose writings), and have reserved for the concluding chapters of this volume such minor matters as came under my personal observation and are of interest as they illustrate his character, though scarcely worthy to rank as events. A brief record of these final years seems therefore all that is requisite to complete this portion of my task.

During his second wife's lifetime the Patmores had found the distance between their home, the Mansion, and the Roman Catholic church at St. Leonard's a great inconvenience; the ministrations of a somewhat eccentric priest were uncongenial to them, and they believed that, if a mission could be established in their immediate neighbourhood, it would prove as great a boon to others as to themselves. The idea was a subject of frequent discussion, and their willingness to co-operate in a scheme which had this object in view became known. A priest, a member of the Pious Society of Missions, who had become acquainted with some members of Patmore's family, made overtures to him with a view to securing for the Society any help which he might be willing to give. Nothing however was actually done during Mary

Patmore's lifetime: had she lived longer, it is probable that they would together have built or promoted a church in Old Hastings to a humble standard and for purely practical purposes. Soon after her death (on April 12, 1880), Patmore determined that this scheme should take form as a monument worthy of her memory. The Pious Society was already first in the field, and Patmore was the more inclined to work with it as its ministrations were mainly devoted to the poor, and its constitution was of a fairly liberal type. An arrangement between Patmore and the Society was made, the nature of which, as he understood it, is set forth in the following letter to "The Tablet." On the envelope containing a copy of this letter is an instruction that it is "*To be reprinted in any biographical notice that may be written of me.*"

"The New Church at Hastings.

"Sir,

"As the new Church at Hastings is now nearly finished and is soon to be opened, it seems a fitting time to correct a misunderstanding that appears to exist in some quarters about the cost of the building—a misunderstanding which may be prejudicial to the interest of the Pious Society of Missions, on the one hand, as it is a misconception of what I have done on the other.

"My part in the work is the fabric of the church proper, from the floor upwards. The land, priest's house, and the extensive and costly basement-storey, below the street level, including the great crypt—used now as a temporary church—the schools, etc., together with all fittings and finishings not coming under the head of the fabric, have been, or are to be, provided and built, at a cost of about £8,000, by the Society.

"My share, the fabric of the church proper, costing about £5,300, has already been paid for by me, with the exception of about £300.

"But the Fathers of the Society have had to borrow largely on the security of their London property, in order

to carry out their part of the undertaking ; and it is for *this* part of the work that help has been, and probably will be, solicited from the Catholic public.

"I shall be glad, Sir, if you will allow me to take this opportunity of correcting another error, which affects myself more personally. I have heard it reported that, in founding a 'Memorial Church' to my late wife, I have been only carrying into effect her intentions. I beg distinctly to deny that she ever, by word or writing expressed any intention or wish of the sort. During her lifetime, indeed, we used sometimes to talk about the necessity for a new church at Hastings, and I called once with her on the late Bishop of Southwark, and offered him a sum of money and a further endowment for ten years, sufficient to have started a Mission. But the Bishop was prevented by circumstances from availing himself of the offer, and no plan was ever afterwards broached between myself and my wife regarding this matter; and the church of 'Saint Mary Star of the Sea' is a purely free-will offering on my part, to the honour of God, and the memory of one of the humblest and most devoted of His children.

"I am, Sir,

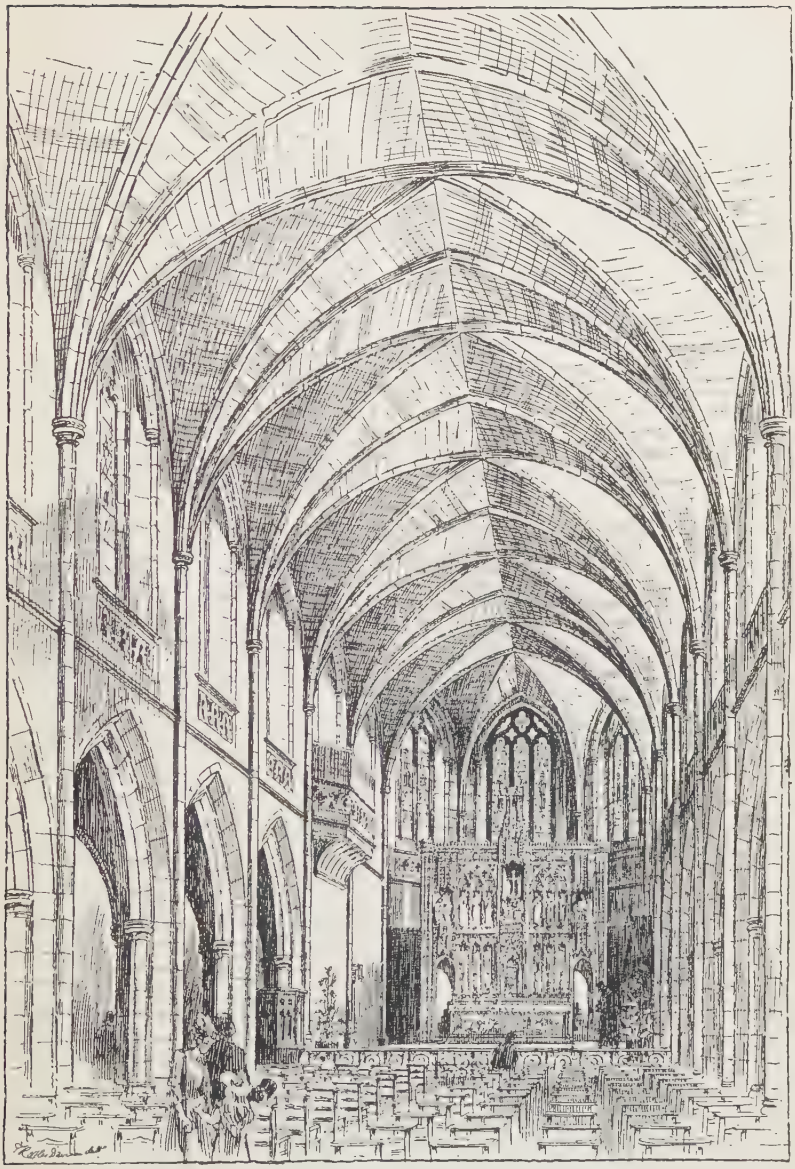
"Your obedient servant,

"COVENTRY PATMORE.

"Hastings, May 18, 1883."

This letter clearly shows what was Patmore's view of his arrangement with the Pious Society. It was only on the very eve of the completion of the church that he found that the necessary funds had been raised by the Society, not as he here states on their London property, but on the church itself.

As soon as the preliminary arrangements were completed, the Pious Society acquired possession of an old house nearly opposite the Mansion, and of an adjoining site sufficient for a large church, which Patmore asked me to design. The ground fell sharply from the High Street level towards the east, and the gradient suggested a basement beneath the choir which might be used as a temporary church while the superstructure was in progress, and even-



ST. MARY, STAR OF THE SEA.

Drawn by T. Raffles Davison.

tually for schools. Meanwhile the Mission was started at the High Street house, where a room was fitted up for a temporary chapel, in which the first Mass was said on Nov. 1, 1880: the crypt was ready for use in March, 1882, and the actual church was opened on July 2, 1883.

Patmore's interest in the work from first to last was intense. From the commencement of the negotiations with the Society until the completion of the building he devoted himself to the scheme in all its bearings, to matters of business no less than of building, and the enterprise formed an engrossing occupation for him. His knowledge of architecture was thorough, and, so far as I was concerned, displayed itself in the most satisfactory manner, in encouragement and appreciation, without interference. He was intent on the work being worthy of its object, and, as he said to me, it was to be "the only Catholic Church in England without any bad taste in it." I may record on my own part the unqualified pleasure which this connection with Patmore afforded me, not merely in his satisfaction with the result, which he expressed with such friendly enthusiasm as I would gladly have persuaded myself to have been fully merited, but also in the more constant intercourse which my frequent visits of supervision entailed. His own pleasure in the scheme was unalloyed until the eve of its completion, when he discovered that the understanding on which he had relied had been violated. Of this unfortunate occurrence I have spoken fully in vol. ii., chapter iii., where I have endeavoured to pourtray his attitude towards the priesthood. It is sufficient that I should state here that the misunderstanding which arose through no fault of Patmore's, unless it be a fault to trust too implicitly to verbal assurances, served to destroy his pleasure in the completed work. The

revolution in feeling was complete; and the church which should have been, as a memorial to his wife, a constant source of consolation and delight, came to stand for him as an irritating monument of broken faith.

While the church was in progress, Patmore had intended to erect a chancel screen, somewhat on the type of those so often found in mediæval churches, surmounted too, as they were, by the Rood with St. Mary and St. John on either side. He was anxious that both the crucifix and the attendant figures should be of the highest standard of sculpture, but saw no chance of obtaining such a result without some scheme of co-operation with others who had the same object in view. The following letter shows how he had intended to bring this about. Mr. Gosse, who had heard of the idea, had advocated Mr. Thorneycroft's claims. Patmore, always faithful to his early friendships, had determined to give Woolner the first chance, if the scheme could be carried out.

"Hastings, July 26, 1882.

"My Dear Gosse,

"Your suggestion is so far from being 'Quixotic' that the great objection to it is that it has been anticipated by an attempt on my part, supported by Cardinal Newman and others, to get Woolner to do a statue, the original to be taken by some wealthy church like Arundel, and casts to be supplied to other churches—including ours—at moderate prices. Woolner, I believe, has still this idea—which pleased him greatly when I proposed it—under his consideration; but, should he not take it in hand, I do not see why your suggestion should not be proposed. Our church is quite unable to give from £1,000 to £3,000 for a statue; but the notion of having a really first-rate statue, casts from which should supersede the wretched Munich things we have now to put up with, seems such a practicable and *paying* one (for the sculptor) that I cannot but think that it will get done some day; and, if Thorneycroft is what

you say he is as a sculptor, he ought to have the doing of it, if Woolner declines.

"I will try to get to the Academy before it closes.

"Yours very truly,

"C. PATMORE."

This project was never realized. The screen was but half completed when the action of the priests of the Mission became known to him. Henry Patmore had died in February 1883, and his father determined to adapt the screen to the chapel at Ushaw, where Henry had been educated, and to erect it there as a memorial to him: nor did he take any further part in the completion of the church.

On Sept. 13, 1881, Patmore was married to Miss Harriet Robson at the pro-Cathedral, Kensington, Monsignor Rouse officiating. In January, 1883, a son was born to them, and was christened Francis Joseph Mary Epiphanius. In the summer of 1891 the Patmores left Hastings, and by the autumn of the same year were established at the Lodge, Lymington, Hampshire.

The following letters require little comment. The "cogent plea" on which Patmore excused himself was, no doubt, that he had ceased writing poetry. In any case he would have been unlikely to have written verses for any "occasion," a task for which he never showed either faculty or inclination.

To Mrs. Coventry Patmore.

"Members' Mansions, Victoria St.,
"17 April, 1898.

"DEAR MADAM,

"In response to your published request to be supplied with letters of Mr. Coventry Patmore for insertion in your Life of him, which cannot but be a work of great interest,

I beg to hand you one which supplies an important and charming exposition of a poet's idea of womanhood.

"The occasion which called it forth was this: Italy celebrated, in May, 1890, the sixth centenary of Dante's Beatrice, and I was asked to collect for it the contingent of homage which might be elicited in England. My application in this behoof was readily acceded to by some of our most eminent writers: the Queen sent a copy of her works together with her autograph: our chief poets favoured me by writing sonnets in honour of Dante's love; Swinburne, Lewis Morris, Edmund Gosse, Sir Theodore Martin, Dean Plumptre, and many others for England; Andrew Lang for Scotland; Aubrey de Vere for Ireland, and the Bard, Rev. T. Tudno Jones, for Wales.

"Of course I solicited one from Mr. Coventry Patmore, who, of all others, was so well fitted for the task. He excused himself, however, on some cogent plea which I am not now able to recall. A little correspondence ensued, in which he expressed himself so sympathizingly at one with the aims of the celebration as I had set them forth at length in 'Notes and Queries' (7, ix., 81), the 'Academy,' etc., that I asked him to mould these sentiments into the form of a letter such as he could authorize me to forward to the Beatrice Exhibition as his quota of participation in its object.

"To this he willingly consented, and I have now procured from the Gallery of the Uffizi in Florence (where all these tributes are carefully stored), the following copy of the letter I had thus asked him to write:

"'Hastings, April 4, 1890.

"'DEAR MISS BUSK,

"'I think that the celebration of the sixth centenary of Dante's Beatrice, as the Italians are likely to manage it, will be a graceful and serviceable honour done to the highest and fairest ideal of womanhood that poetry has ever represented. It will be particularly serviceable at a time when that ideal is so widely denied or forgotten. True manhood and true womanhood,

". . . the poles
On which the heavenly spheres revolve,"[1]

[1] From the "Angel in the House," cant. ii., prelude i.

are mutually protecting and enhancing; and everything that makes women more mannish, makes man more womanish, and takes more or less of the light, warmth and joy out of life. May Beatrice and Heaven save us from a general reduction to that "neuter gender" which seems to be the ideal of "strong-minded" women and weak-minded men.

"'Believe me yours faithfully,

"'COVENTRY PATMORE.

"'To Miss R. H. Busk.'

"I remain, Dear Madam,

"Yours very truly, R. H. BUSK."

Though I have not thought it needful to catalogue Patmore's friendships, but have been content that they should appear incidentally as events or correspondence dictated, there is one which needs to be specially recorded. I remember that in 1875 he invited my special attention to a volume of poems called "Preludes, by A. C. Thompson," illustrated by her sister, Miss Elizabeth Thompson, now Lady Butler. These poems seemed to him to show unusual promise. It was not however till 1892 that the friendship between the poet and poetess was established. Miss Alice Thompson meanwhile had married Mr. Wilfrid Meynell, who was well known in literary circles, and sometime editor of the "Weekly Register" and "Merry England." The friendship which was then commenced developed into close intimacy. Patmore's admiration of Mrs. Meynell's poems was extended to the prose work which she produced later; indeed he came to think even more highly of her essays than of her poems, and advocated with enthusiasm, both privately and in print, her claim to rank among the foremost writers of the day. When, after Tennyson's death, the succession to the laureateship was a subject of general discussion, Patmore suggested a new departure, proposing that the laureate should for the first time

be a woman, and maintaining that of living poetesses none had a claim equal to Mrs. Meynell's. She on the other hand wrote a remarkably able appreciation of the Odes, which she included in her first volume of essays, entitled "The Rhythm of Life" (1893), and in 1895 published a volume of well-chosen selections from his poems, called "Pathos and Delight," in which a reproduction of Mr. Sargent's portrait of Patmore, for which he sat in 1894, figures as frontispiece. The friendship was no mere literary alliance: the Meynells were frequent visitors at the Lodge, Lymington, and for some years Patmore made their house his headquarters in London, where his friends were hospitably received by his host and hostess. It was through them too that Patmore became acquainted with the poet, Francis Thompson, whose work shows much similarity to his in thought and not infrequently in form.

When in 1892 the post of Laureate became vacant by Lord Tennyson's death, not a few of Patmore's friends wished that the succession should fall on him. Many thought that his claims were paramount; others that, as it was unlikely that he could live to occupy the post for more than a very few years, he might well be preferred to others of equal claims who were greatly his juniors; some Roman Catholics were doubtless influenced in their advocacy of his appointment by the desire to secure the post for a member of their Church. Patmore had done little to conciliate either political party: his corrosive diatribes against Mr. Gladstone and his followers had been scarcely more destructive of any prospect of political support than his condemnation of the faithless Tories. He told me that his claims had been put before Mr. Gladstone, who had confidently assured the applicant that "Patmore had

died many years ago." (His best work however had but recently appeared.) Patmore took no steps in the matter, except, as I have shown, to advocate Mrs. Meynell's claims, nor did he concern himself about his prospects of succession to the post. He could at no period of his life have brought himself to write for "occasions," and had long ceased to write verse at all. He would, as I think, have been gratified by the appointment, which however he could have accepted only on his own terms. I find but one letter on the subject. This also gives his own account of the miscarriage which prevented him from attending Tennyson's funeral (see p. 191):

"Lymington, Oct. 15th, 1892.

"My Dear Gosse,

"Thank you for your very friendly mention of me in your article on the Laureateship. I have always considered it to be so out of the question that it should be offered to me that I have never even considered what I should do if it were. I am glad that you advocate the claims of Austin Dobson. His appointment would satisfy every body. Certainly it would me.

"I missed meeting you at Tennyson's funeral by the accident of the invitation reaching me too late. I was staying in London, and the ticket was sent to Hastings and thence to Lymington, and thence to Town, where it found me just an hour too late.

"Yours ever truly

"Coventry Patmore."

The reader will already have gathered from my narrative that Patmore's health had never been robust. He had from comparatively early years suffered from lung-weakness, which had often caused grave anxiety, and to some extent had interfered with his life's work. He had however frequently shown great recuperative power, and, until shortly before his removal to Lymington, seemed likely to live for many years. Looking over his letters to me I find that before leaving

Hastings he was conscious of some failure of vitality. He writes:

"Hastings, Feb. 1891.

"My Dear Champneys,

"....I have been very poorly ever since the great frost ceased. While it lasted, I was in the highest health. Since then, the most lively feeling I can get up, is one which enables me to say with Clough, 'I can wait to die.' But as I am half-way through my sixty-eighth year I suppose this is as much as I can reasonably expect....

"Yours ever

"C. Patmore."

Later he wrote to me describing a succession of illnesses from which he completely rallied: but it was evident to those about him that he was aging rapidly. When I was staying with him in 1895, I was alarmed at the change which was apparent, and at the frequent attacks of vertigo and faintness to which he was increasingly subject. I persuaded him to consult a London physician, and arranged that my brother Dr. Champneys should give him friendly advice as to the specialist whom it was best for him to see. He wrote to me:

"Grosvenor Hotel, Nov. 29, '95.

"My Dear Champneys,

"I saw your brother to-day. He was very kind and careful, and gave me a letter to Dr. Norman Moore, who says it is a weak and unequal action of the heart. I asked him if I should die of heart-disease. He said 'Probably not, but that it is not unlikely'....

"Yours ever truly

"Coventry Patmore."

In June 1896 he wrote to his old friend F. G. Stephens:

"I am alive but half-an-hour in the day. How long will it be before that half-hour is withdrawn?"

I spent a week with him in the late summer of 1896. He was then in better health than for some time past, and at no other period of the Lymington life did he seem to me to show more geniality, ease, or contentment. His family remember that at this time he was much given to talking of his earlier life. He saw me off with a pressing invitation to return as soon as I was back from Scotland, but this proved to be impossible and I never saw him again. All else that need be told is conveyed in the following letters to Mrs. Herbert Fisher, the daughter of his old friend Mrs. Jackson. The one is from the doctor who attended him in his last illness; the other from his eldest surviving daughter.

"Grosvenor House,
"Lymington, Dec. 1, '96.

"DEAR MRS. FISHER,

"I am very glad to give you any particulars about Mr. Patmore's last few days.

"It was his habit for a long time past to take a walk between 8 and 9 in the evening, and I had often warned him of the danger of catching cold, which to him would be serious.

"His last walk was on Monday evening, 23rd Nov. He got up the next morning apparently in his usual health, but soon went back to bed, being suddenly seized with coldness and a violent attack of hepatic colic with sickness. I went to him immediately, and found him pale in countenance, with deadly cold extremities.

"The pain had gone by the time I saw him, and I am glad that he suffered no more actual pain, and only the distress of restlessness. He was quite himself in mind that day. On the next day, the sickness having quite ceased, a breathlessness commenced, when I found congestion of the left lung setting in. He also began to wander, and at those times he went through the action of smoking imaginary cigarettes and throwing away the ends. He had often before thought he could not get over his illnesses, and on that day, the 25th, he said to me, 'What about going to Heaven this time?' I said we should try to keep him here, as long as

we could, when he remarked, 'I am afraid you are making the best of it.' I told him his illness was very serious. He was quite calm and undisturbed by my saying so. He talked very little, but told Mrs. Patmore he did not wish many about the bed when he was dying. The next day I found him much worse, but able to recognize me, and on my second visit on that day, the 26th, I found them all at prayers, and he was sinking fast. He passed away quite quietly about an hour afterwards. To-day at the funeral I found myself standing by one whom I recognised as one of your sons, and I was very glad to give him a welcome here for the hour he had to spend before his train went. . . .

"Believe me, yours sincerely,

"W. R. HILL.

"Mr. Patmore's little boy did not come home till after his father's death. It was thought best that he should not have any distressing recollections."

"The Lodge, Lymington,

"Jan. 10, 1897.

"DEAR MRS. FISHER, . . .

"I will tell you all I can about papa's illness and death. His health had been fairly good all the year, although his strength had failed much, so that he looked older than he was instead of younger, as formerly. Ever since he learnt, about a year before his death, that his heart was weak, he had been depressed and very nervous about his health. About a week before he died, our sister-in-law, Milnes's wife Kitty, came to stay with us. She is very clever, good and charming, and her society really gave papa pleasure: he enjoyed talking with her on literary and religious subjects; so that he was particularly cheerful that week, consequently felt more hopeful about his health. Only on Monday, the 23rd Nov., he went for his two usual walks, in the morning to read the papers at the 'Angel Hotel,' and between 8 and 9 in the evening, for a walk towards Vicar's Hill by the river. After the last walk, he sat with mama, Kitty and me in his study, cheerfully talking until about ten o'clock, when we all went to bed. Among other things, he said that night that he considered 'Amelia' the best of his works. Next morning he got up rather earlier than usual, and went down to his study, and

began a cigarette, apparently quite well. Soon he went back to his bedroom (where Mama was still in bed with a bad cold), and said he had such a dreadful pain that he must go to bed, and then he felt very cold; soon he was very sick, and the strain of that made his heart bad. By next day he had his lungs affected and pneumonia. As soon as the pain came on, on Tuesday morning, papa felt he should die; and he sent for F^r. O'Connell and received Holy Communion and the last Sacraments that afternoon. Father O'Connell was most kind. He slept here that night in case papa was worse, and said Mass in our Chapel for papa on Wednesday morning. After that he came repeatedly and prayed with and for papa, both before and after his death; and he said Mass in our chapel several times, instead of only once in the week, as usual. He was also most kind in helping mama in many ways, in all her business arangements.

"On Wednesday morning papa seemed rather better, but by the afternoon he was worse. That day a nursing sister came; but by the evening papa was wandering rather, and he did not like the sight of a stranger, so mama and a maid stayed up with him all night, as had been the case on Tuesday night. Next morning he was much worse. About 2.30 Father O'Connell came and read the prayers for the dying, and gave him the last blessing and Absolution. All the household were assisting at the prayers. Once Father O'Connell paused a moment, being overcome, and papa went on himself, saying, 'Depart thou Christian soul.' Dr. Hill came while we were praying and knelt with us. At the end of the prayers we left Dr. Hill, mama, the sister and an old servant in the room. Presently mama was putting papa's silver cross, containing a relic of the true cross, by him, but he tried to put the string of it round his neck. Whilst Dr. Hill helped do this, papa said, 'This is for Piffie when I am dead. Dear little boy.' After Dr. Hill had gone, I think, papa asked mama to kiss him. He put his arms round her neck, and said 'I love you, dear, but the Lord is my Life and my Light.' After that, almost to the end, he kept trying to repeat a verse of a psalm, though he could not concentrate his mind enough to get the words quite right. About ten minutes to four the old maid came down to tell Kitty and me that papa was really dying, but mama thought we had better not go up again (Kitty was

very poorly, and I think she thought it might upset us both), but, instead, go into the Chapel, where we had the Blessed Sacrament. So the servants joined us, and we were all praying aloud for him when papa died at 4.10. For the last quarter of an hour the labour of his breath ceased, and he was quite quiet and free from pain. He tried to put his hands together at last. He looked very peaceful after death. . . .

"I remain, dear Mrs. Fisher,
"Yours affectionately,
"BERTHA PATMORE."

On December 1st, 1896, Coventry Patmore's body, robed in the habit of a tertiary of the order of St. Francis, was laid in the Roman Catholic portion of the Lymington cemetery. A few friends met at the little church, whence the coffin was borne to the grave. As it passed the picturesque Parish Church, its bell was tolling and the aged clergyman was seen standing uncovered at the door,—a graceful recognition of Patmore's character and distinction, and of the influence of his religious writings, which made for peace by soaring above controversy.

The grave is now surmounted by a monument designed to indicate by symbol[1] and legend the

[1] The following anticipatory notice from the "Athenæum" for May 5th, 1897, may serve to explain the general intention of the design :—"Its size is such as to be subordinate to a churchyard cross which is to be placed near the the centre of the Roman Catholic portion of the enclosure, and the position of the grave was especially selected on this account. It consists of an obelisk placed on a square pedestal raised on three steps symbolical of the Trinity; there will be at each angle of the junction of the obelisk with the pedestal a sculptured lion, the meaning of which in connection with the obelisk will be readily understood by readers of 'Religio Poetæ.' On three sides of the upper portion of the pedestal will be engraved the name of the Poet and the dates of his birth and death; at a lower level the front will be adorned with a panel symbolically carved. Above will be represented the Cross and Host rising from a stem from which spring lilies intertwined with the initial letter of the Virgin's name,

B. C. inv.

THE MONUMENT AT LYMINGTON.

To face p. 348.

tenour of Patmore's life and thought. On one side of the pedestal are chiselled extracts from his verse, on the other from his prose.

The metrical extracts, from the "Odes," are as follows:

". . . Constantly his soul
Points to its pole
Ev'n as the needle points, and knows not why."

". . . Seers who see,
And with convincing music clear and loud,
Startle the adder-deafness of the crowd
By tones, O Love, from thee."

The prose passages, from the published essays, are these:

"A moment's fruition of true felicity is enough, and eternity not too much."

"The bliss of heaven is the synthesis of absolute content and infinite desire."

"All the love and joy that a man has ever received in perception is laid up in him, as the sunshine of a hundred years is laid up in the bole of the oak."

---

and below will be the laurel wreath denoting that the poet's powers were devoted to the honour of Christ and his Mother. This design will be enclosed by a band in the form of a *vesica piscis*, on which will be the legend, 'My covenant shall be in your flesh'; and, in the spandrils, the letters A.M.D.G."

CHAPTER XXIV

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS, 1864—1896

Heron's Ghyll

I HAVE endeavoured, in the preceding portions of my narrative, to recover from the records and letters which have been available, some idea of Patmore's personal characteristics as they presented themselves to those who knew him at earlier periods. I propose here, for the same purpose, to put together recollections of my own intercourse with him during all the many years of our friendship, confining myself to those which bear on the general impression which his character produced on me and omitting such matters as are more appropriately recorded elsewhere with a view to illustrating his views on special subjects of thought. In this endeavour I find myself placed at some disadvantage from the fact that I never, during the whole period of our intercourse, made a note of any conversation; nor did I, to my great present regret, preserve his earlier letters to me. I had at no time before his death any reason to anticipate that it would fall to my lot to write about him, and, in any case, should have had no inclination to compromise pleasant personal intercourse by conscious intrusion of an ulterior purpose. If, however, my recollections are on this account less full than they might otherwise have been, compensation may be found in the hope that the sort of "natural selection," which by the lapse of time is unconsciously developed, may have

HERON'S GHYLL.

To face p. 350.

served to give due prominence to the more important memories.

My interest in Patmore had been aroused in my Cambridge days. A friend who had happened to be associated with some of the leaders of the Præ-Raphaelite movement had lent me some of his poems, I think the "Tamerton Church Tower" volume. I had also read the "Victories of Love," as it appeared in Macmillan's Magazine, with the special interest which attached to it from the circumstances under which I understood it to have been written, and had heard, from common friends, much about him personally.

It must, I think, have been early in 1864 that, walking from Hampstead to Highgate in company with a friend who knew him, I caught sight at the corner of Caen Wood[1] of a sombre, stately, solitary figure dressed in deep mourning. My friend introduced him as Mr. Coventry Patmore, and, though but a few words passed, what little he said left an impression of sadness, gravity, and extreme reticence, entirely consonant to his appearance. He seemed as one who had passed through poignant sorrow with unimpaired manliness and with increase of dignity. His personal appearance, so far as I can recall it, was then a good deal like the picture painted by Mr. John Brett at an earlier time (that which is given opposite p. 84), and the more salient characteristics with which I was afterwards so familiar were rather indicated than developed.

I did not see him again till some six years later. I was then paying a visit to some friends who lived a few miles from Tunbridge Wells and who knew

[1] I find that the walk he was then taking was the same which he had been accustomed to take in his first wife's company. He writes in his diary, "My unspeakably happy walks in Millfield Lane and Hampstead Lane, every day for years."

Patmore intimately. He had meanwhile joined the Roman Catholic Church, married a second time, settled at Heron's Ghyll in Sussex, partly rebuilt his house, and was then well embarked upon the improvement of his grounds. Our hosts arranged a visit to him, and we drove over one lovely summer day—a party of some three or four. We found Patmore deeply immersed in his landscape-gardening, full of schemes for planting, damming, puddling and draining, and justly proud of his house and its surroundings. It happened that he had seen and been interested in some early work of mine, and, always genuinely devoted to architecture, took an obvious pleasure in talking on this and cognate matters, seeming especially pleased with the warm commendation which I could candidly pass on the work which Mr. Bentley had done for him. I remember being struck with the refined and almost ascetic simplicity of the home life, the early hours and simple meals; with the signs of his interest in animal life—his love for and knowledge of dogs, fishes, and birds.[1] There were many songsters about the house, such as bullfinches and Virginian nightin-

[1] Patmore indeed always seemed to me to have a special insight into the workings of animal intelligence. As an example, I give the following story. He had a St. Bernard puppy of a highly nervous temperament. One day his son had taken the dog with him for a walk and was obliged to return by train. When the train ran into the station the dog showed signs of extreme terror: during the short journey it was trembling all over; and ever after showed signs of fear if a train were seen or heard. One day when Patmore was walking out with the dog for a companion, it suddenly showed signs of agitation similar to that which the train had always caused; but there was no railway in sight or within hearing. Patmore was at first at a loss to account for the animal's terror. Then he noticed that on the other side of the road was a row of low cottages, at the end of which was a chimney discharging a volume of smoke. He saw at once that to the dog's perception the cottages would look like a train of carriages, and the

gales; and, in an aviary, all sorts of birds, beautiful and ugly, of various and not usually compatible kinds, which seemed to have been trained to live together as a sort of "happy family." He seemed to know the ways and characters of all these, and had many interesting stories to tell of their manners and of the steps by which some sort of mutual accommodation had been reached. I left much impressed with the home and with its master, and under promise to pay him and Mrs. Patmore a visit shortly. From this time my visits to Heron's Ghyll became frequent, and not less interesting to me than the first. I often went down for Saturday-to-Monday holidays, and the Sundays were spent in walks and drives in the lovely neighbourhood. I found him always in those days an easy and genial companion, showing no desire to force conversation above the ordinary social pitch, but never failing to betray in his most ordinary converse the signs of his strong individuality. I gathered from his talk that he had anticipated some degree of ostracism on account of his conversion. At any rate he seemed to wish me to understand, what indeed I already knew from others, that he was no bigot. It was, I think, on the very first occasion when I stayed and walked with him that we passed a new Anglican church, and he told me that he had just presented it with a bell, thereby, as he said, making himself liable to a sentence of excommunication. On another visit he told me that when he first came to Heron's Ghyll his neighbours had wondered how he would face the fifth of November, which they looked upon as a crux for the "Papishers,"

smoking chimney like the funnel of the engine. He drew the dog out of sight of the cottages and found that its terror ceased.

The story is told in a book called "Our Pets and Playfellows," written by Patmore's third daughter, Gertrude, now Mrs. Watts. I give it here as in was related to me by Patmore himself.

and how he had surprised and silenced them by having the biggest bonfire and Guy in the whole country-side.

It was not however until I became much more intimate with him that he opened out on any definitely religious subjects. The first time he introduced such matters, it was to regret the selfish and debasing materialism of the age; and he seemed anxious to know, with a view to the development of deeper sympathies, that I at least accepted a supernatural rule of conduct. But there was never any obtrusion of his own individual views nor of the dogmas of his Church, nor was there then nor at any future time the least suspicion of proselytism. It was after a good many years of intercourse that he began to speak more openly on the subject that was always nearest to his heart, and which I found, by increasingly intimate self-revelation on his part and more careful study of his writings on my own, to be the mainspring of his life and work.

Patmore however though the chief, was by no means the only interesting figure in the Heron's Ghyll life, and I may in this connection, though the subject is more specially dealt with elsewhere, record the impression made on me by his wife, Mary, and his eldest daughter, Emily. Mrs. Patmore from the first struck me, no less than Patmore's other friends, as being extremely shy; and indeed, though always a kind and considerate hostess, she was by no means easy to converse with. There was something about her which I can only describe as "old-maidishness"; and this manner clung to her to the end of her life. It would however have proved a great lack of discernment on the part of his friends if the very fine qualities of mind and heart which she possessed had been altogether hidden from them by her extreme reticence. I remember that the first point which struck me was her complete absence of egoism.

I knew that it was her fortune on which the home mainly depended; but never once, in the whole of our intercourse, did I see even the slightest intimation on her part of consciousness that this was so. Patmore, always somewhat patriarchal in his ways, ruled the home as his own, managed the property, inaugurated changes, and was in all respects the complete master. He had in fact, as I knew, done excellently by her estate, and she had, and had reason to have, complete confidence in his judgment. Still it seemed to me proof of an altogether exceptional nature that no sign of her special relation to the finances ever once transpired. It was obvious too that her devotion to his children (she had none of her own) was complete. Doubtless the "old-maid-ishness" to which I have alluded had made it somewhat difficult for her to attract them. But it was evident that in spite of such disadvantages, in spite too of their loyalty to a real mother not altogether forgotten by the elder children, the step-mother had won a really filial respect from all. There can, I think, be no doubt that she herself suffered from the consciousness of her shyness, and welcomed whatever served to break the barriers which it created. At a later date I saw with amusement and pleasure how she tolerated—even delighted in—what seemed to me the supreme audacity of a much younger man who adopted towards her a playful, even "chaffing" manner, and who came to be one of her greatest favourites. My intercourse with her had from the first indicated to me a lofty, unselfish character, infinitely worthy of respect, however difficult of access. It was not long before I had convincing evidence that this was far less than the actual truth. During the Heron's Ghyll days circumstances occurred which caused me to recognize in her a large-mindedness, a depth of sympathy, a fervour and exaltation of spiritual

religion, and made me aware that it had been my privilege to have had revealed to me a really saintly character, hidden from all but a very few by its own modesty and diffidence. The curtain fell when the occasion had passed, and was never again lifted; but the impression made was permanent and endowed all future intercourse with a special interest.

The eldest daughter, Emily, was often from home during my earlier visits, and had taken the veil before the Heron's Ghyll days were over. I remember her as a handsome girl of seventeen or so, with frank manners and a mien of maidenly pride which might be called "farouche," not altogether concealing great possibilities of fervour. I understood that she was then eagerly sought by a devoted lover, but felt no inclination to marriage. It was not long before she decided on a religious life, which she embraced with all the enthusiasm of an ardent nature. I gathered that in the home life she was full of fun. Patmore told me how she had played ghost one summer night and had almost taken them in—when he detected the fraud and found her more frightened than her intended dupes, lest the real article should appear to her and resent the usurpation of its prerogatives. Patmore was always humorously appreciative of youthful ways, and had many a story to tell of his children, each indicative of individual character. Though his will was law, they never seemed to me to have any unwholesome fear of him, nor was it easy for me to believe that he had ever been unnecessarily severe. Those passages in the "Odes" which are expressive of remorse, and which appear to some to give evidence of undue harshness in the past, seem to me to tell rather in the other direction. The sentiment which inspired such utterances is far more indicative of a tender nature which, having acted on the compulsion of

duty, is none the less subject to pity and compunction: the narrow and unsympathetic disciplinarian is more likely to be self-satisfied and aloof from remorse. At any rate, so far as my observation went, I could see no indication of any lack of sympathy, while his insight into and interest in the individual characters of his children was exceptionally keen.

Though the home life was extremely simple, almost, as I have said, ascetic, it was clear to me that its character was dictated rather by an aim at "plain living and high thinking" than by any motives of economy. It was evident that Patmore thoroughly and constantly enjoyed the relief from straitened means. No money was spared on the estate, though none was wasted. He freely indulged his taste for pet animals, kept as good a head of game on his property as it would hold, at a quite disproportionate cost; and among the smaller luxuries which he allowed himself was the lavish use of logs in the wood fires which were kept going in all but the hottest days. I can even now recall his tall figure striding into the drawing-room from his books or letters, taking up his characteristic position, the back against the mantlepiece, the tails of the velvet shooting-coat under his arms, a kind of shake and shiver like that of one of his favourite Newfoundlands just out of the water; the turn towards the fire and the liberal piling on of logs, which was in no degree checked by a gentle reminder from his wife how much they cost him, a remonstrance which he met only by a tolerant smile. Then he would, as the fire burnt up, bask to his content, and one felt that the genial sense of easy circumstances was probably more of the essence of his enjoyment than the physical warmth. It was obvious too that this change afforded no less pleasure in the freedom it gave him to receive his friends,—a pleasure fully shared by his generous

wife. His visitors were not many in those days, partly, I think, because, from a possibly overstrained sense of the difference which his conversion and second marriage would have established in his relations with his former friends, intercourse with many of them was suspended. But I, and some others, not least those who owing to ill-health or sorrow had everything to receive and little to give, were always able to feel abundantly welcome, with a freedom to come and to go not very often conceded to visitors.

Nor did I find the intellectual atmosphere less free or genial than the social. Having previously known but few Roman Catholics and one only (a very abnormal specimen), with any intimacy, I naturally approached the new friendship with some timidity and a sense of the need of caution. This however I soon found to be superfluous: nothing more was required than the ordinary reticence imposed by social rules on those who may be expected to differ. Once in very early days I remember to have made a slip through inadvertence. I had just received from its author "Studies in the History of the Renaissance," and, knowing Patmore's great admiration for the work of Botticelli, was induced to read the essay on him aloud. Before I knew what I had got to, I found myself committed to a passage implying that the Virgin Mary had had other children than Our Lord, with whom she felt herself in more restful human sympathy than with Him. Such an idea was necessarily repugnant to the belief of my auditors, and was met by Patmore with something like a snort of indignation, and by his wife with a gentle murmur of disapproval. They made, however, no comment, and did not argue the question. I believe too they understood, without any explanation of mine, how the misadventure had arisen. But, so long as no matter of essential faith

was compromised, there was no embargo on freedom of talk, nor even on humorous stories which turned on religious matters. Patmore loved a good story, detested the Puritanical attitude which called for a long face whenever religion was touched on, and held that to be afraid of a joke about it was a sign of insecurity of belief rather than of conviction.[1] Those who believed the essentials in their heart of hearts could afford to trifle with externals. I remember telling him a story, I think of a monk's sermon, which was no doubt superficially irreverent, but which he received with delight. Then I told him how severely shocked another had been by the same anecdote. He remarked, with his characteristic confidence, that it was far better to risk an apparent irreverence, which at worst was a venial error, than to be a prig; for to be that was to be "in a continual state of deadly sin." These trenchant judgments of his lost nothing in piquancy by being expressed in terms of theology. On the other hand I was once present when something was said which seemed to him seriously to compromise reverence for the Deity, and I can recall to this moment the indignant turn of the head as he faced the unfortunate speaker, the curl of the lip and snort of contempt, more crushing than any force of words, which he would not condescend to use.

So that I soon found the proper basis of intercourse to be perfect freedom of speech,—an assumption of essential sympathy, with the implication that differences of professed creed were no more than a formal severance. I have already said that I was

[1] Mr. Gosse records ("Contemporary Review," Feb. 1897) a characteristic saying of his: "No one is thoroughly convinced of the truth of his religion who is afraid to joke about it, just as no man can tease a woman with such impunity as he who is perfectly convinced of her love."

never able to detect the smallest suspicion of proselytism; but had he had conversion in view, which for other reasons I do not believe him to have had, he could have adopted no more far-sighted tactics. But of his attitude towards such questions I have spoken more fully elsewhere.

One of the most characteristic among the many paradoxical points in his character which forced itself on my notice at an early date, was the strange combination of an extreme optimism in matters of every-day life with a hopeless pessimism in things political. Everything about him was the best. He was proud of his wife, whose lofty and saintly character he obviously appreciated (though he never opened out to me about her till after her death), proud of his children, of his landscape, natural and artificial, of his animals, his game, and his workmen. I remember in later days talking with Lionel Tennyson and his wife, who had just been seeing him at Hastings, and who gave a humorous account of his optimistic appreciation of all his circumstances: "His house was the only house in England he could have brought himself to live in, Henry's poems the best ever written at his age, Bertha's drawings the finest ever put on paper, his St. Bernard the biggest ever whelped." At the same time the political outlook was never less than desperate. No statesman on either side was to be relied on for a moment: the distinction between parties was only that between the various shades of black, and scarcely worth making; England, a corpse simulating life only by the exuberance of its corruption.

As for the optimistic appreciation of his circumstances, one was content to let that alone—even to endorse it: indeed it was evident that Patmore had the faculty of impressing his own powerful individuality on his surroundings, of making them as it

were a part of his external self; and as such they were bound to be thoroughly congenial to him. And about his pessimism it was lost labour to argue. In vain did one endeavour to make him fix by date "that mild and almost mythic time of England's prime," prepared to show, if one could, that, wherever in time he placed it, it had, in the light of ordinary reason certain rather serious defects: in vain did one call attention to hopeful symptoms in the present. For material improvement, such as the social rise of the working-classes, he cared nothing, seeing that it did not appear to him to involve that spiritual and moral advance which was all he cared for; and examples of personal bravery and self-devotion were to him mere sparse survivals of a manliness generally submerged in the ocean of self-indulgence with which material prosperity had deluged the age. It was clear that his imagination had idealized the past, while he was almost morbidly cognizant, to the fullest detail, of defects in the present. His position was obviously inexpugnable, and the subject one to be let alone. I retained only a sense of the tremendous contrast between the two outlooks, the personal and the political, and an interest in opinions which one hoped there was no need to share.

There are few of Patmore's more serious experiences which he has not to some extent embodied in verse. The Heron's Ghyll period, as we know, laid the foundation of the Odes, the subjects of which were however for the most part inspired by events of an earlier date. There are indeed two of them which may be taken to embody ideas drawn mainly, if not exclusively, from this section of his life: "L'Allegro," is a picture of the Heron's Ghyll days, rather generalized than idealized, and "St. Valentine's Day" is no doubt founded on the close ob-

servation of nature which country life developed, and for which he never had elsewhere quite the same advantages, at any rate in his later days. One passage in "L'Allegro" always recurs to me as representative of this phase of Patmore's life:

> "And now come home,
> Where none of our mild days
> Can fail, though simple, to confess
> The magic of mysteriousness."

Not very long after I had begun to visit him at Heron's Ghyll he seemed to realize that he had spent so much upon the place that it had ceased to be a home suitable to moderate means, and at once began to take steps towards making the house more suitable for lease or for sale. He considered its accommodation to be too little for the property, and determined to increase it. This he did by the addition of a gateway tower communicating with the house and giving an addition of some half-dozen bed-rooms. When this was completed he sought a purchaser or tenant and soon found an occupant of the latter kind, who, but for a characteristically chivalrous scruple of Patmore's, would have bought the place outright. This tenant, whose name I have forgotten, had made a large fortune by Australian farming; had lost it, and made a second. He had now finally settled in England, and determined to lead a country life not devoid of letters. He had been down to see Heron's Ghyll, taken a fancy to it, asked the owner to name a price; and, at the point of departure, had expressed his determination to buy it. Patmore however refused to close with the offer until the intending purchaser had slept over it. In a few days he heard that the Australian preferred a lease with the option of purchase. Soon after the tenant had entered on his new home, Patmore asked me to run down with him and look over

the estate. On the way he told me that the ex-Colonist, determined to make up for his defects in education, had imported large cases of books, mostly novels, which were to supply the necessary food for the mind. We lunched with him; and after some talk about the estate, he introduced the subject of literature, evidently thinking it due to his landlord's attainments that this should not be ignored. After a pause in the conversation he inquired somewhat sententiously:

"I don't know whether either of you gentlemen have observed that nearly all the most sensational and improper novels of the day are written by young ladies?"

One of us asked him to give examples.

"Well there is ——— and ——— and Georgie Eliot" (the law of libel warns me against filling in the blanks).

We let the dashes pass, but demurred to the strictures on the mature spinster indicated by the last name. At this he said rather indignantly,

"Well I don't know what you gentlemen consider to be sensational and improper, but I consider 'Aurora Floyd' to be both in a high degree."

During the interregnum between the letting of Heron's Ghyll and its final sale to the Duke of Norfolk, Patmore was frequently in London, taking for a time a furnished house on Campden Hill. Here he renewed many old friendships and made not a few new ones, giving me too the opportunity, both then and afterwards (when it was his habit to run up to London and ask his friends to dine with him at the Grosvenor Hotel), of observing his ways in general society. Whether it had always been so,

as I am inclined to think, or whether it were the result of the many years he had spent as a recluse, it is certain that his attitude on ordinary social occasions was receptive rather than active. He did not seem to have any care for or to be skilled in the give-and-take of average converse. He would sit at the head of his table, silent for the most part, looking happy and unembarrassed—his face wearing a sort of tolerant half-smile—and would give, from time to time, a genial assent to any words which seemed to him to hit the mark. Occasionally he would rouse himself and interject a remark, which was, as often as not, seemingly irrelevant, being intelligible in the context to those only who knew him well,—which, moreover, broke as frequently as it encouraged the flow of talk. He was however a most indulgent listener, and his mere presence seemed in some way to stimulate conversation and keep it on a high level, while he himself generally went away impressed with the brilliance of the talk he had heard. I received numbers of letters from him in which he says, "So and so dined with me. I never heard better talk in my life." The same remark was often passed on gatherings at which I had been present, some of which, for meetings of accomplished people, had not, as I thought, come off so exceptionally well. It seemed to me that, after long absence from society, talk of very average excellence made on him something more than the just impression. However, this readiness of appreciation was distinctly encouraging to those who noted it, and for his own sake and that of his guests was by no means to be regretted.

It was, however, in very small companies that he showed to most advantage. As an example I recall with pleasure an evening we together spent with Carlyle, when no one else was present but Carlyle's

niece ; and I am the more glad to commemorate this meeting because Carlyle has been named as one of the old friends whom Patmore had alienated. It was evident that the intercourse was completely congenial to both. Carlyle, who naturally did most of the talking, was at his very best, and the chuckle which concluded his most savage sayings gave evidence of his present good-humour, while it afforded a valuable gloss on other apparent barbarities in his spoken and written words. Patmore's attitude, in the presence of a much older friend, was exactly right. This was, I think, the only occasion on which I met him in the company of one of superior age and eminence. There was a dignified deference about him. He said little, but what he did say was apposite and well-calculated to encourage the flow of brilliant, characteristic talk. I felt sure that Carlyle found his company exceptionally congenial, and this perception was confirmed to me by Miss Aitken who told me, shortly afterwards, how much her uncle liked Patmore and his quiet, reticent ways.

But *tête-à-tête* was the form of intercourse he loved best ; it was this which his friends and he himself mostly sought and enjoyed. On one occasion, when a visit of mine had coincided with that of another friend, and Patmore had fallen, more than either of us wished, into the attitude of listener, he said to me "You must come alone another time. I can't have good talks with both of you at once." Also I remember meeting there an ecclesiastic of a high order who had not much to say which interested Patmore. He however made the necessary sacrifice to social duties by carrying on commonplace talk with an effort which I appreciated but which was imperceptible to his guest. When the latter showed a desire for bed, Patmore made no demur beyond what

courtesy required, and then remarked, "Now that excellent old gentleman has gone, we'll have a *talk*." These private talks were the main objects of one's visits to him, and though the matter of them belongs, in great measure, to other portions of this record, I may well describe here the manner in which he imparted his most intimate beliefs and transcendental thoughts. I may observe in passing that, in proportion as one was admitted to this higher type of intercourse, ordinary conversation, even for the purpose of filling embarrassing gaps, became for him more and more of a difficulty. He seemed to find it scarcely worth the necessary effort, and very often remained silent for long periods, always however ultimately redeeming them by some words of pregnant and illuminating wisdom. I would gladly convey some idea of the intensely impressive manner with which he communicated his most abstruse and mystic thoughts; the evidence of his strong desire to carry his hearer with him to the full height of his soaring flight; the conviction that he could make his most transcendental ideas no less obvious than the result of a mathematical demonstration; the absolute sincerity of his apprehensions; and, not least, the anxiety to confirm his most individual intuitions by the authority of the Church. As he became absorbed by his subject he would lean forward and towards his hearer, fixing him with an intent and rapt gaze which focussed itself rather in the centre of the brain than in the eyes:[1] he would grasp his hearer's arm, demonstrate with the index finger on the hand as though expounding a mathematical problem; then throw himself back in his chair with some such remark as, "and I have consulted the most learned theologians of my Church about this,

[1] He was himself aware of this pecularity, see vol. ii., p. 107.

and they tell me that it is the essential doctrine of the Catholic Church, but that it would never do to proclaim it." His ultimate pleasure in his own apprehensions was obviously based on a sense of having discovered by his unaided intuition what he believed that the Church had all along been more or less cryptically teaching. The encomium he would have valued most of all might be expressed in a variation of a phrase of Tertullian's, "O mens naturaliter Catholica." One may be excused for having often wondered whether those who endorsed for the Church thoughts which seemed so essentially individual may not have indulged in a pardonable economy; whether they had really meant to convey more than that these mystic conceptions were not incompatible with true doctrine.[1] But the question is one on which only an accomplished theologian could venture an opinion.

[1] I gather from what I believe to be competent authority that the Roman Catholic Church has abstained from fixing definite limits to the scope of transcendental apprehensions. It would, therefore, be the duty of a director to encourage mystic ideas so long as they neither directly nor indirectly compromised established dogma.

CHAPTER XXV

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS, 1864—1896

Hastings

HERON'S GHYLL having been disposed of, Patmore sought another permanent home, and was fortunate enough to secure for (so he thought) as long as he chose to occupy it, the Manor House of old Hastings. He had been familiar with this watering-place for very many years. It was there that as a child he had first 'beheld the ocean'; it was there that he had spent his first honeymoon, and thither his wife Emily had been wont to go for change of air when her failure of health began. Patmore told me that he had always looked on the house as an ideal home, and had indulged in youthful day-dreams of some day living there. Certainly there were exceptional charms in situation, house, and garden. The house stands at the inland termination of the "old town," in the gorge through which runs the old London Road. It is sufficiently raised above the bed of the stream, now mostly covered in. In front is the hill which terminates seawards in the East Cliff: behind it, the ground rises rapidly towards the summit which ends in the Castle Hill. Parallel with the High Street runs the old-fashioned garden, of some four acres, evidently laid out in what was known as the Italian manner which was in fashion more than two hundred years ago; while the shrubs, grown into trees, gave further evidence of its antiquity. Along the upper portion

is a long grass terrace ending in a wilderness; below is a garden of mingled flowers and herbs. Though close to the main thoroughfare, the grounds are perfectly secluded, while the intervals between the trees give charming glimpses of the picturesque old town with its red-tiled roofs. The grounds form a sort of "*rus in urbe*," being in the town but not of it; and so well sheltered is it that, though Hastings ranks as a "bracing" place, the garden can rear quasi-tropical flora, and seasons are strangely anticipated in its vegetation.

The house-front is of the formal Georgian character, covered almost entirely by an ancient magnolia. The interior adapts itself picturesquely to the hill side. In front are three sitting-rooms on the level of the entrance, the dining-room to the right, to the left the study, where were kept the few books which Patmore had in constant reading; behind it a morning room, used mostly by his wife and daughters, in which were stored the bulk of his own books, together with the not inconsiderable number which had been kept out of the large library inherited by Mary Patmore. A good staircase led to the fine drawing-room, the farther end of which came level with the ground as it rose. A few more steps brought you to the best bedrooms, and an additional flight to the numerous attics which, Patmore was glad to find, were nearly all good enough for guest-rooms. One of the main sources of his satisfaction in securing the house was that he need never forgo visits from his friends; and he wrote to me that there was now no need to arrange my visits, but that it was to be "wire and come."

He had not long been settled in the new home, and I had not yet been down there, when he wrote to tell me of a terrific storm, which, but that it occurred at neap tide, would, as he thought, have

almost swept Hastings away. He expected a recurrence, and I was to be ready to run down at any moment if he telegraphed. The message came in due course but found me, to my great disappointment, hopelessly engaged. However, a little later on, I had the good fortune to be there already when the greatest of all the storms occurred; and I witnessed with him an appalling vision of the powers of nature let loose. By no means the least interesting subject of observation, and the only one which I have any right to commemorate here, was the attitude of the poet himself. He seemed wrapt and absorbed by the wild turmoil; exultant at every manifestation of the huge power of material forces; exultant even in the devastation caused. When, the day after, we walked along the sea front and witnessed the immeasurable destruction, his delight in the scene seemed to me almost cruel. Long afterwards I heard that he had immediately sought out one of the principal sufferers, a poor keeper of a lodging-house, and offered her £50 to make good her losses.

I found the life in the new home established very much on the lines of that in the old, except that there was some relaxation of hours. Probably because there was a greater chance of casual guests, the times of meals approached more nearly to the normal. The day was laid out in the same manner. Immediately after breakfast Patmore and his male guest adjourned to the study for a chat, not unseasoned with tobacco. He had by that time taken to smoking almost incessantly, always mainly, and in later days exclusively, cigarettes, which his daughters had the privilege of making for him. Of these there was an endless store, and I hesitate to guess the number to which the daily consumption mounted. It was obviously understood in the household that these colloquies were not to be interrupted

OLD HASTINGS, FROM HIGH-WICKHAM.

SHOWING ST. MARY, STAR OF THE SEA.

Drawn by T. Raffles Davison.

To face p. 370.

without sufficient reason. Till eleven or so the time was accounted for by talk and a very hurried glance at the daily paper, when it so chanced that a paper was admitted : for it often happened that one asked for it in vain : something had arisen in the political world which had added even a further degree of hopelessness to the political outlook, always desperate, and "it was wiser to shut one's eyes to what was in progress." Somehow or other, though the ordinary avenues of information were thus closed, Patmore seemed to know what was passing—what statesmen were coming to the front, what further enormities were to be feared ; nor did he always bring himself to abstain from a word in season to the press. On the next visit probably the old newspaper had found its way back, or another had taken its place. When the paper was there Patmore seemed to get all he wanted out of it almost at a glance, and to have mastered its contents, which he had not had time to read, in the ordinary sense of the word. At one time he used, after hasty perusal, to pass on the newspaper, Conservative organ though it was, to his pet raven, who would attack it viciously and tear it into shreds, "showing," as Patmore would observe, "a true appreciation of the '*rot*' of the daily press."

After the conference came a walk of a couple of hours, in earlier days generally towards Fairlight and back by his favourite point on the East Hill, whence could be seen the old town nestling beneath us in its ravine, half shrouded by the blue smoke which, always blowing either landwards or towards the sea, gave a softness and mystery to the picturesque detail; the two old churches standing like sentinels on either side of the valley and at either end of the town ; beyond, the sea-line running westwards towards the Highlands and Bexhill, with Beachy Head outlined in the dim distance.

Before very long, possibly owing to some premonition of the heart-weakness which proved ultimately fatal, the walks were limited to the Parade, and even here became gradually shortened. After the one o'clock lunch Patmore retired to his room for a siesta from which he returned some hours later for a chat or for a short ramble in the garden before the early evening meal. The rather long evening was inaugurated with a smoke and talk, then an hour or so of family whist, then the study again till bed-time, which, if Patmore happened to be in vein, was apt to be considerably deferred. Not infrequently, especially if a comet was to be seen, or an eclipse, a walk was preferred to any other pastime, and was often protracted well into the night. In later years these evening walks became a pretty constant habit.

Patmore's whist was by no means scientific, but often indicated readiness of resource quite unaided by conventions and rules. But what interested me most about it was his inexpugnable conviction that he was nearly always the winner. He used, when I was there, to propose points far in excess of the modest domestic standard, and to embark on the game with all the exhilaration of a reckless gambler, at the same time telling everyone present that he always won when he played with me; nor could I convince him that, as was the actual fact, the balance inclined, on the whole, the other way. It was one of the curious examples of the optimistic view which he took of all personal matters, so strongly contrasting with his political sense.

Whether it was that at this period his mind actually reached its fullest power while his physical vigour was still unimpaired, or, it may be, because he then began to impart to me his deepest and most ideal conceptions,—certain it is that these

earlier Hastings days seem to me, looking back, to have shown him at his very best. It was at any rate the time in his life which was most prolific of his best work. It was then that the Odes were completed; and the prose works, collected and published later in the volumes known as "Principle in Art" and "Religio Poetæ," were then mainly written. So, too, was the "Sponsa Dei" which was never allowed to see the light. There was too at this time a vigour in his talk, a constant display of his striking individuality, which self-expression, though it never ceased, became in later days more uncertain and intermittent. Also I seem to have seen him more frequently at this than at any other time, and to have obtained a more complete knowledge of his special characteristics.

One of these, which was most clearly marked, was the exceeding strength of his modes of expression, which constantly, with those who knew him little, passed for overstatement. Frequently however I found that, when his utterances had appeared most exaggerated, examination of the facts literally confirmed them, proving that it was only his highly-coloured imaginative presentment which had given this impression. Nevertheless, under various influences he undoubtedly did, not infrequently, indulge in definite exaggeration—generally from a mischievous humour which made him delight to shock prejudices with which he had no sympathy. I remember, for instance, how on one occasion the doings of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was discussed. Patmore said that he so detested the morbid effeminacy in which the Society indulged, that, when he read of any of their more flagrant acts of mercy, he always went to the stable-yard and gave the dogs a thrashing all round. As a lady who was staying there for the first time was one

of his audience, his daughters felt it right privately to put in a disclaimer, which for those who knew him better would have been quite superfluous: "Papa does not really do it, you know."[1]

There were none who incurred his anger so much as sentimental faddists, humanitarians, anti-tobaccoists and teetotallers. He utterly disbelieved in making people virtuous by system, detested interference with personal liberty, and loathed sentimentality and softness. I remember one day discussing with him "a short way with burglars." We wished that more people would take to shooting them at sight, and decided that horse-pistols and buck-shot were the most effective instruments. Next time I was with him I found he had bought a pair of huge pistols, and that we were to try the effect of them. We unearthed a great wooden screen, sketched on it the best map of a burglar which we could concoct, and tried how many shots a single discharge would lodge within the outline. As we were both unused to this special form of artillery, one cannot but deem it providential that neither did the poet shoot his future biographer nor the latter his subject. The experiment promised excellent results (from the point of view of the burgled), and I believe that

[1] When the mischievous fit was on him, Patmore was prepared to go great lengths, even to wilfully misrepresent his religious convictions and the doctrine of his Church, with a view to getting a rise out of his victim for the time being. A lady whom he loved to tease tells me that he one day took her into the church he had built at Hastings, and said to her, "Is it not a fine thing to know that all the sins which I have committed, or which I may commit, will certainly be forgiven me? I have built this church to last, as nearly as may be, forever; and while it stands, possibly for a thousand years, masses will be said for me, and all my sins will be forgiven. Don't you believe this?" She answered "No, I don't; and you know quite well that you don't either"; which was perfectly true. Patmore's only answer was, "What a d—d little Protestant it is!"

Patmore longed for an opportunity for a practical test. I do not think that, had the occasion arisen, he would have hesitated to shoot or failed to hit; but he would probably afterwards have secretly supported the family of the victim.

If the Hastings period was specially productive of good work and talk, it was none the less a time of frequent sorrow. While he resided there Patmore lost his second wife, to whom he was bound by the closest ties of spiritual communion and deep though unostentatious affection; his eldest daughter, who was in specially close sympathy with him; and his son Henry, who showed promise of giving to another generation work of the same quality and to some extent of similar vein to his father's. All these losses affected him profoundly. It seemed indeed to be his doom to part first with those of his family with whom he had the most deeply-rooted sympathy. I naturally hesitated to visit him while his sorrow was fresh, but was glad enough to go when I knew that he wished it. On such occasions I found him superficially much as usual. There was no change in the daily routine, no invitation to expressions of sympathy, no ostentation of grief. I noticed that his periods of silent rumination were more frequent and longer than before: there was just a hint of increased gravity of manner, and a note of spiritual exaltation, as though the other world had been brought nearer to him by the accession to it of his loved ones. He never in my hearing, any more than in his later writings, discussed hopes of immortality nor of reunion in a future world; not, one felt intuitively, because he had any doubts, but because such questions had long since been settled in his own mind and laid aside as quite elementary doctrines of the faith wherein he had attained to the

higher levels of apprehension. If the position were reversed and it was his visitor who had undergone bereavement, his attitude was analogous; some softening of manner, a few special marks of confidence and regard, an unusual liberality of self-revelation,—these were the signs of sympathy which alone it was natural to him to vouchsafe, and duly understood, were more salutary and soothing than any outspoken condolence.

It was these days too that afforded the first opportunity of observing his ways with very young children. His third marriage had given him a son who from the very first was his frequent companion, and between whom and his father there was always an excellent understanding. The child had, more than any member of his household, the freedom of the study, and his interruptions of private colloquies were the only ones of which Patmore never betrayed the slightest impatience. He treasured up for his friends the childish sayings, which he specially delighted in when they were at his own expense. I remember, for instance, his telling me with the utmost glee how the little son had realized for the first time that his father had been married thrice, and had exclaimed, "Why, Papa, you're half as bad as Henry VIII.!" He watched with intense interest the effect on the child of the earliest religious teaching which, as he said, he seemed to "suck in like mother's milk," and used to wonder to me how those fared with their children who had to forgo the benefits of a fully formulated method of instruction. It would certainly be impossible to see a more beautiful relation between father and son than was established between these two,[1] and it was the more

[1] About 1887 Patmore writes as follows: "When my first family were little children, I was too much harassed by hard work and ill health to enjoy them rightly. It is only since I was sixty, when

striking because of the unusual difference of age (Patmore was nearly sixty when this son was born), and of the autocratic character which he was generally, and not always without reason, considered to present. To my own children, when they were old enough to visit him with me, he was always thoroughly genial. They never felt any shyness with him, and spoke out with the utmost freedom. He had a profound belief in the intuitions of childhood, and often commented on the directness with which the mind unhampered by self-consciousness would hit the mark where incomplete maturity bungled and was at fault.

It was during the Hastings period too that he seemed most disposed to move about. His taste of more general society in London had disposed him to visit new scenes, and he went in my company to Oxford and Cambridge, seeing at both universities some of the best of the social life. We also together stayed with Robert Bridges, then just rising to poetic fame. Later on he was my companion for a week at Houghton on the Test, where I then had the right of fishing.[1] He was intensely interested in the sport, but still more in the fascinating, complex movements of the gin-clear stream, which, he told me, haunted him through the night. I hoped that his impressions might be recorded in verse, but by that time he had ceased to write poetry. There is however a sentence in one of his essays which sketches in a few words the appearance of the water as it moved: "Repose . . . . which bears upon the stately movement of its eternal stream the passions, pains, and pleasures of life, like eddies which show

my last born came into the world, that I have known the ineffable happiness of being a father."

[1] Some amusing letters written during this visit are given in vol. ii. pp. 134-138.

the motion that is too great to be perturbed by them." I recall one characteristic incident during this excursion. He came to me one evening at dusk by the river where I was casting for a large trout rising under the near bank. I devoted my attention to the trout for half an hour or so, after which it was too dark to throw a fly with any accuracy, and I had to give him up. When I rejoined Patmore, he said, "I said seven 'Aves' for you to catch that fish." I argued that prayers should be reserved for more important interests than sport. To this he partly agreed, but added that, in his opinion and in that of his Church, there was no harm in praying for comparative trifles. If it was well for you to obtain them, you would probably get them by prayer, and if not, no harm was done. The remark seems worth recording in illustration of the anti-puritanical character of his religion.

Changes of physique and of manner are, to those who have opportunities of observation at short intervals, difficult to detect as they develop, though they gain clearness in retrospect. Looking back, I seem to see a marked distinction in these respects between the Patmore of my first acquaintance and him of the Hastings days, and a further change appears to have occurred during his life there. The facial characteristics seemed to strengthen, the peculiarities to become more salient and more picturesque, the manner and carriage somewhat more angular and less easy. Moreover he had become subject to a sort of chronic bronchial affection which made his laugh more harsh and generally caused it to be followed by a dry cough. This gave a new acquaintance the impression of a more sardonic humour than was really characteristic of him, and contrasted forcibly with the low, quite whole-hearted

chuckle with which his older friends were familiar; and I am not greatly surprised that many who knew him in this phase only, who heard his humorously strong statements (the humorous intention was not always obvious except to his intimates) and the somewhat harsh cachination which followed, failed to apprehend the essential geniality of his character. The favourite attitudes continued the same. While talking, he would now stand with his back to the fire, his coat-tails under his arms, always assuming his position with a kind of shake of adjustment; then lean far back into his low cane-backed chair, his legs stretched in front of him, his long hands sometimes grasping the elbows, at others employed in eager demonstration; and when deeply interested in the talk he would lean forwards towards his companion, holding him with an eye as fascinating as the Ancient Mariner's; then the pose against the mantel would be resumed. When he was walking, all such signs of restlessness ceased, as though the exercise were in itself a sufficient discharge of "reflex action." He usually took his companion's arm, and walked at a moderate pace, with a slight stoop forward of the neck and head and without swinging of the arm or action of any kind. But he could neither move, stand nor sit, any more than he could speak, without betraying the force of his individuality. One could only notice as time went on a gradual failure of alertness in his movements, of whole-heartedness in his laughter, and a rather more frequent preference of silence to speech; but a constant increase in pregnancy and condensation in his utterances compensated fully for their decrease in volume, and the change was too gradual to disturb a frequent visitor.

During the earlier years of Patmore's residence

at Hastings, there had been considerable friction between him and the eccentric priest of St. Leonard's Church. Patmore was full of half-humorous complaints about him and his methods. I remember, for instance, his telling me how Father —— told his congregation one Sunday that, as he had lately been thoroughly dissatisfied with the amount of the collections, he meant to come round and collect himself. "I had," said Patmore, "put ready in my pocket a sovereign and a shilling. When Father —— brought the plate to me, I put both openly into the palm of my hand, and then ostentatiously put the sovereign back into my pocket and the shilling into the plate. I was of course preached at the next Sunday, almost by name; but Father —— had had his lesson." His dissatisfaction with this priest's ministrations had been one of his motives for founding the new church, St. Mary, Star of the Sea. Unfortunately, before the church was furnished and opened, the difference with the Pious Society of Missions had begun. The pleasure he had anticipated was poisoned at the root, the object of the sacrifice he had made, imperilled, and his attachment to the locality weakened; and, though circumstances arose which would in any case have severed him from the home, the congenial Hastings life may be held to have terminated with this miscarriage.

THE LODGE, LYMINGTON.

From a photograph.

CHAPTER XXVI.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS, 1864—1896

Lymington

THOUGH these difficulties had served to detach Patmore from the Hastings home, it is doubtful whether he would have voluntarily left it in his lifetime. He had held it, as he believed, on a verbal understanding that he would not be called on to quit; but a new owner to whom it passed required it for himself, and Patmore had to look elsewhere. He was fortunate enough to hear almost immediately of the Lodge, Lymington, in many important respects similar to the house he was leaving, and he succeeded in obtaining for the new abode the same privilege which he had enjoyed at Hastings—the license for a private chapel. With his usual optimism he found the new home a great improvement on the old; wrote me an enthusiastic description of it, and, not without some degree of friendly special pleading, endeavoured to show that it was at least as easy of access for his London friends as Hastings had been. I visited him there in the early autumn after he had taken possession, and found him thoroughly settled—full of appreciation of his surroundings, near and far. The house stands on the eastern side of the estuary, opposite Lymington, which is reached either by a ferry or by a viaduct. It commands the old-fashioned, almost amphibious country town towards the west, seen over a shallow channel which is filled and emptied by twice the

usual number of tides: the far bank is bordered by wharves, sheds, and the paraphernalia of shipping, behind which the picturesque little town rises towards the quaint old church. The southern outlook commands a fine view of the Isle of Wight, especially of the downs above Freshwater, on which the cross erected in memory of Lord Tennyson now stands out, a conspicuous landmark in clear weather. There is little traffic past the house, and the sense of proximity to and isolation from the life of the neighbouring town is not dissimilar to that produced by the Hastings home. The house itself, far less attractive outside, is, within, scarcely less characteristic and even more spacious and comfortable. It has evidently been added to repeatedly, and has acquired in the process the air of ingenious adaptation to actual requirements, of irregularities and surprises, which is so charming when its origin is genuine, and which seems so affected when arrived at by needless and calculated scheming. It has some eight sitting-rooms, one of which opens on to a conservatory, which was always kept well-furnished with flowers, and a proportionate number of bedrooms. The garden, of some four acres, is in great measure overgrown with trees and shrubs; but the more open portion, which is mostly kitchen garden, is rendered picturesque by very old gnarled espaliers and standard fruit-trees, while the soil is unusually prolific. Patmore told me that the landlord, who had owned considerable property in the neighbourhood, had skimmed his fields and transported surface soil enough to form six feet depth of garden earth over the entire area. There were plenty of pleasant walks inland, especially that along the east bank of the marsh—formerly saltings, now a favourite haunt of herons, through which ran the little river Boldre—to Boldre Bridge and Boldre Church. Such walks

were within Patmore's powers during the first year or so of his residence there; but the best were in the forest, some four miles distant by rail or road. This he loved in all its aspects, especially as it appeared in autumn. I remember his remarking to me as we walked in it that he believed he was the only poet who had commemorated the special autumn grouping of the foliage, as he had done in the phrase, "the *bossy* autumn woods." He would tell me how he had conceived the idea of cutting himself loose from all duties domestic and social, transporting into the heart of the forest a disused railway carriage of two compartments—one for sleeping and the other for the day—and living in it alone; and he would ingeniously combat all the difficulties which I could suggest as inherent in such a scheme.

The society of the new home too seemed to suit the family requirements. The neighbourhood consisted mainly of the families of retired officers, military or naval, well-bred people of moderate means and unpretentious lives—a society in which his wife and daughters could join without undue ceremony or display, and which need be no burden upon him. There was too a fair amount of such male companionship as proved congenial to him personally. He was soon on excellent terms of friendship with Mr. E. H. Pember, the well-known parliamentary barrister, with Mr. Knowles, the painter, and with Mr. Doman, the Lymington poet, whose verses had been published by the advice of William Allingham, and who was delighted with Patmore's genial appreciation of them.

The local society was however scarcely such as would prove generally appreciative of his literary attainments; and one or two amusing incidents occurred to show that it was not as a poet that he was generally understood or valued there. For example:

a lady happened to be making her first call at the Lodge while the Roman Catholic bishop of the diocese was staying there for some ecclesiastical ceremony. He entered the drawing-room during her visit in purple cassock and biretta, and wearing the pectoral cross,—when the ladies of the family, according to custom, knelt down and kissed his ring. Knowing nothing of the Roman episcopal dress and as little of the ways of poets, the visitor, who took the bishop to be Mr. Patmore, was surprised and interested, and after leaving the house inquired of her friends "whether all poets wore that handsome garb, and whether it was the universal custom for a poet's children to kiss his hand whenever he appeared." On another occasion, when a fairly large company was gathered at his house, a lady, who found herself there for the first time, was suddenly conscious of a pleasant coincidence suggested by the name "Patmore," and she said, "Patmore!—I am sure I have heard the name before. Yes, and now I know how I heard it. I remember that long ago a sister of mine got engaged to a briefless barrister—a *briefless* barrister! Of course, my father would not hear of the marriage; but I remember that the briefless barrister gave my sister a book, and it was called 'The Angel in the Home,' or something or other, and I am sure that the name on the book was 'Patmore,' and I know that it was put away in a cupboard, and I think I know the very cupboard it was put in, and I believe it is there now, and—yes—I am quite sure the name was 'Patmore.'" And she smiled, quite delighted with the pleasant impression she must have produced on her host and the company by the fortunate recollection of this coincidence of names.

Such stories Patmore would tell with the greatest gusto. Indeed, none seemed to delight him so much

as those which turned on some mis-appreciation of himself or of his Church. There was, I think, no single one in which he revelled so much as the following, which I told him more than twenty years ago. A somewhat similar story, which I cannot but think must be the same, altered by passage through several hands, is told in the second series of Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's recollections; but it may well be given in its original form, for which I can vouch, as it came to me direct from its source.

A menagerie passed through a little Yorkshire village, and the local sages set themselves to name the animals. They did pretty well with most, but were fairly stumped by the camel. After much discussion a genius suggested that it must be a "Roman Catholic;" and this identification was generally accepted. The parson, in confuting the Papal creed, of which there were no adherents in the neighbourhood, had left on his hearers a notion of something abnormal and grotesque, which found for them its embodiment in this animal.

The work he was engaged on in these days was the revision of the Essays, all or almost all written at Hastings, which formed the volume entitled "Religio Poetæ," and the actual writing of the aphorisms and very brief essayettes which appeared as "Rod, Root and Flower." He had not, even in these earlier Lymington days, abandoned the idea of writing more poetry, and often said that he thought he could compose a narrative poem in the metre of the Odes—something like "Amelia" on a much larger scale—if only he could find a suitable subject. Some few plots were suggested, which he dismissed as being "too good,"—an expression which he did not further explain but of which the meaning was sufficiently obvious. There is a wide difference be-

tween versifying a story, originally moving and exciting, and raising a subject into interest by poetic handling.[1] The poem was never commenced, and the only verses he afterwards wrote were a few quatrains or couplets of a social or epigrammatic character. He used also in these days to talk, half seriously, half humorously, about a new political publication which he proposed to found. The idea was to bring home to those on the wrong side in political and other questions a due sense of the enormity of their doctrines by expressing them with a sort of ironical crudity. He thought that if the trappings of verbiage and all other specious disguises were removed, the enemy might be revealed to the public, perhaps even to himself, in all his deformity. He even went so far as to draw up a list of possible contributors to such a publication. It was obvious enough, even to him, that the staff must be small, and to his friends that probably he alone could thoroughly enter into the spirit of such an enterprise. It would have been difficult to find a second who could command a similar force of sardonic humour; and, even if the publication could be launched, the probability was that the ironical intention would with most readers have passed undetected, and that the writers would have been classed as somewhat indiscreet advocates of the views it was desired to confute. It was, I think, some anticipation of this kind that led him to abandon the idea even as a subject of discussion. He had found abundant reason to complain of the misappreciation which the humorous aim of some few of his writings had suffered, and had, as readers of his essays will remember, announced in a bitterly sarcastic note, his determination never again to indulge in irony without first announcing his intention. The publica-

[1] See vol. i., pp. 261-262.

tion which thus perished before its birth was to have been entitled "Tom o' Bedlam." [1]

[1] It would, I think, be difficult to find a better example of the tone which Patmore intended this projected periodical to adopt than the following letter of his to "The St. James's Gazette," Dec. 19, 1887:

THE NEW POETRY.

"SIR,—Most of my friends maintain that the day of poetry is over; and that it is well that it should be so, seeing that poetry is, like punning, a departure from the 'normal process of correct mention,' regarding, as it does, all things not as they are but as they seem. It appears to me that it would be more accurate to say that the day of all or nearly all poetry which has been hitherto written is over (that of Walt Whitman may perhaps be excepted), and that poetry must conform henceforward to the new state of things created mainly during the last quarter of a century by science. When Mr. Frederic Harrison has declared that the greater part of Shakespeare is rubbish, and Mr. Charles Darwin has confessed that he is nauseated by that writer, it would be a mere waste of words to insist upon the sickening effect of the writings of Milton, Spenser, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the other comparatively minor poets, upon persons accustomed to correct mention. But why should there not be a new poetry, founded upon fact, as the past has been upon fallacy? Why should the lark that, according to Wordsworth,

'Soars, but does not roam,
True to the kindred points of heaven and home,'

depend for his poetic interest upon such false and absurd praises as are accorded to him in this sentence and the ode of Shelley, when we know that the earth-shaking shrilling of that bird has for its only and very sufficient purpose to make the worms which are its food appear at the surface? Why should the poets go on attributing 'piety' to the robin, when all readers and observers of natural history know that 'piety,' in its old and vulgar sense, is exactly the virtue which the redbreast turns up his beak at most contemptuously. I have myself repeatedly verified the fact, which is recorded by Wood and other natural historians, that the young robins kill their parents, as being no longer fit for anything but to interfere with the food supply of the rising generation, as soon as ever the said young ones are strong enough for the operation. Poetry, from the days of Homer to our own, has been nothing but one huge exemplification of what Mr. Ruskin has justly con-

I may also commemorate here, though the fancy perhaps was more engrossing in the Hastings days, his taste for possessing valuable jewels. He had a natural love for fine stones, and a gift of appreciating and valuing them, which might have made him a successful diamond merchant. It was, I think, a cer-

demned as the 'pathetic fallacy.' We have cleared ourselves, in our daily practice, pretty well from religion, 'reverence to superiors,' superstitions about love and chastity, and many other kinds of cant; but we still go on reading and praising the poetry which supports all such fallacies and hypocrisies with the most fatal persuasiveness. What is the use of excluding religion and other nonsense from our schools, if we encourage our children in spending their spare pence and hours upon Cassell's and other twopenny-halfpenny editions of such 'rubbish' as 'Hamlet,' 'Comus,' Keats's 'Odes,' or the 'Angel in the House'—which Mr. Frederic Harrison has very properly stigmatised as 'goody-goody muddle?' Will they put any effectual faith in our instructions when we ourselves place in their hands the inebriating cup of what might—if there were any such things as devils—be properly called 'the wine of devils,' poetry—as poetry is now understood?

"But I trust a better time is coming. In the very act of writing this letter my eyes have caught the following paragraph among the 'Literary Notes' of 'The St. James's Gazette'—'Mr. Ernest Rhys is going to America to lecture. His subject will be "Walt Whitman and the New Poetry;"' and it was only yesterday evening that, walking in the suburbs of a pleasant village in Sussex, I overheard a little boy, who had paused on his way home from the Board school to throw stones at the windows of a solitary 'house to let,' singing a hymn which commenced—

'Twinkle, twinkle, little star!
Now we all know what you are;
Fumes of soda, flames of tin,
And incandescent hydro-gin.'

I regret that the little boy, catching sight of me, ran away, so that I was deprived of the remaining stanzas of this specimen of the 'New Poetry'—the sort of poetry which must be quickly substituted for the old, if we wish to avoid some terrible reaction against all that is truly liberal and progressive.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

SCIENTIST."

"*December* 19."

tain *trouvaille* which he happened on at a Hastings jeweller's, a gem offered at much less than its true value, which first started him on this pursuit. He very speedily acquired other jewels, the best of which were set as an adornment to a silver crucifix. These stones were constantly being exchanged for others, always in the confident expectation of an increase of value: his transactions brought him into touch with the principal jewellers and diamond merchants in London, and the traffic became a regular occupation. I remember asking him what had first launched him on this career, and he told me that it was mainly his profound distrust in the stability of England, the constant anticipation of a sudden and overwhelming catastrophe, which had convinced him of the necessity of converting a considerable portion of his estate into something which he might carry away at a moment's notice. One could not help being reminded of Mr. Wemmick's "portable property," nor wondering at the depth of the pessimism, which, after all due allowance for humorous exaggeration, the notion evinced. Though Patmore felt assured of the profitable result of each separate transaction, it was scarcely to be expected that he would, in the long run, be able to hold his own with the trade. I understood from him however that, when he eventually realized, he did so without any loss beyond the interest of the money thus invested; and this, he said, he had fully taken out in the pleasure of having the stones about him. He certainly acquired in the course of this pursuit a remarkable power of valuing jewels, and could tell, almost at a glance and within a very narrow margin, what sum any specimen would fetch.

It was not very long before the final failure of his health that he was persuaded, mainly by Mr. Gosse's advice, to sit to Mr. Sargent for the picture which

is now in the National Portrait Gallery.[1] I ran down to Lymington soon after it had been sent home, and Patmore was full of praise of it. It was "the best portrait which Sargent, or probably any other painter, had ever painted." The next morning at breakfast, at which Patmore did not appear, I asked the other members of his family their opinion of it, which they declined to give till I had expressed my own; and I was in due course taken to see it. It was obviously an exceptionally fine work of art, but seemed to me to incline towards caricature, and to present a somewhat truculent character, alert and active rather than reflective, thus missing the aspect of "seer" which, in later years, had alone seemed to me characteristic of him. It was indeed strange to see how qualities, which were unquestionably components of Patmore's many-sided nature, though their physical expression was, for most observers, obscured by the habits of a contemplative life, had been manifest to the painter's eye, and by him were brought into startling prominence. Patmore asked me my opinion, and I told him that if the picture had been extended downwards there must have appeared the handle of a whip, and that he would then have been fully revealed as a sort of Southern planter on the point of thrashing his slaves and exclaiming, "You damned niggers." This criticism seemed to please him greatly, and he said "Is not that what I have been doing all my life?" He always delighted in any tribute to his grasp of active life, and prided himself on his power of dealing blows to the adversary. I remember his showing me about this time a review of the "Religio Poetæ" (it was, I think, by Mr. Henley), in which the critic more or less passed over

[1] A reproduction of this is given as the frontispiece of vol. ii. Mr. Sargent made also two oil sketches of Patmore, one of which is illustrated opposite p. 58, vol. ii.

his spiritual apprehensions as unintelligible, but dwelt with keen appreciation on his political and social opinions. This somewhat unexpected view seemed to please Patmore extremely; no doubt mainly because he considered that his hold on practical life formed a guarantee for the soundness of his religious ideas, but also, I think, in some measure because he was conscious of powers which might have commanded eminence in other careers than that of poet and "seer."

About the time of his migration to Lymington signs of physical failure began to be apparent. In 1894 he had a series of illnesses extending over some six months, from which he rallied, to feel, as he told me with his characteristic optimism, "better than he had ever been in his life." Nevertheless, it was obvious that his strength was seriously impaired. He was unable to walk far, and, even in the short walks to which he had to restrict himself, often suffered from weakness and vertigo. His face aged very rapidly: he found it more and more difficult to make the slightest effort, to write a letter, even to sign a cheque. When starting for one of the very short walks which were all that he could now compass (usually to the hotel in the town, where he would rest for some half-hour and read the "Times"), he would not take the trouble to exchange his dressing-gown for an overcoat, and preferred to face the local society in this picturesque but unconventional garb.

One of the most conspicuous as well as most unfortunate instances of this failure of energy which came under my notice occurred in connection with the publication of "Rod, Root, and Flower." I had read the work in manuscript, and had called the author's attention to a paragraph in which, no doubt

through lapse of memory, he had misrepresented the essential meaning of a well-known sonnet of Wordsworth's, and had built on the error a theory which I thought peculiarly unfortunate. He accepted, or appeared to accept, the correction at the moment; but when the book appeared I found to my surprise that the paragraph was retained in its original form. It naturally became the subject of severe stricture from an otherwise friendly critic. I imagined that, as was not infrequently the case, he had yielded his opinion for the moment and afterwards reverted to it. This however was not so; for he wrote to me later to say that he had thoroughly assented to my criticism and had resolved to correct the passage, but had been quite unable to summon up the necessary energy. I think too that in other respects this latest volume, as well as the few essays which he published during the same period, shows signs of failure from a similar cause. Doubtless throughout his career as a writer Patmore gave too little consideration to the point of view of the reader. He was always, more or less, a law to himself; and so long as he was sure of his own footing, of the truth of his own apprehensions, he was not greatly concerned to present them in the most persuasive or conciliatory form. But in certain passages of this latest volume unusually little care is taken to avoid risk of misunderstanding, and his other writings of this time show a similar miscalculation of effect, which I feel justified in attributing to a constantly increasing failure of energy. He became more preoccupied and more silent; often too apparently less happy in his ruminations. What little he wrote for publication, though not failing in insight and power, was deficient in the old pregnancy, and seemed perfunctory rather than inspired. There was clearly a weakening of the will, which often assumed the

appearance of deterioration of judgment. It was however clear to his intimates that his critical power was potentially as keen as ever, but there was less alertness, possibly less single-minded independence in acting on it than in earlier days. Often the old vein of brilliant talk returned, and was even more impressive than before: moreover, the largeness of view, which is the special privilege of old age to those who have merited it, was conspicuously shown in these last years. In his religious talk he dwelt more and more on essentials to the exclusion of slighter matters,—showed that he had enlarged his spiritual and intellectual sympathies and become more "Catholic" in the widest and best meaning of the term. If his moments of self-expression were less frequent, they were continually of greater import, and pourtrayed in equal degree spiritual intensity and a charitable width of view. Whenever the mist of physical weakness cleared, the sun shone forth, never more brilliant than towards its setting.

Looking back upon little less than thirty years of close intimacy with the subject of this memoir, I cannot but gratefully recognize an interest and an influence of a most unusual, most stimulating, and most beneficial nature. The retrospect moreover is absolutely unalloyed by any single misunderstanding or disturbance of friendly relations. Not that I felt qualified either by intellect or idiosyncracy to identify myself with all his most strongly held opinions, or to rise with him, even in imagination, to the full extent of his flights into those mystic regions of thought in which his spiritual nature moved as in its habitual element. Scarcely could

he himself have claimed or expected full companionship on his journeys into the empyrean. Still it is certain that personal intercourse in no small measure aided comprehension of his written words, and that this twofold revelation of a striking personality served to bring into view the essential unity of appearance, manner, character, and intellect. Nor should I fail to record how great an advantage it necessarily was to have seen him under varied circumstances, and at stages of life sufficiently apart to show the different phases which the same personality could present. Those who knew him only under a single aspect of time or surroundings can scarcely have apprehended the full scope of his character and must necessarily be to some degree at fault regarding him. This more extended knowledge at least enables me the more confidently to correct certain impressions of him the existence of which cannot be ignored. The common popular idea which conceived him to be a mild, soft, and rather sentimental personality will be, by all who ever even saw him, at once dismissed as absurd—as derived only from the study of his earlier writings, and even this study a superficial one. The opposed and more specious opinion of him—that of a somewhat harsh, severe, autocratic, and unsympathetic individual—is but one degree less wide of the mark, and can only be excused in those whose knowledge of him was limited to the later days, and was, even within these limits, inadequate. It is however not impossible to conjecture how such an opinion became current. Patmore neither was nor greatly cared to be an adept in ordinary social talk. Most subjects of general conversation entirely failed to rouse him. He would remain silent until some topic was introduced which touched, or seemed to touch, some one of his deeply-seated opinions, political, social,

or religious, and would then give vent to some strong, pregnant, possibly paradoxical expression, which had the effect of the explosion of a gun in a grove of twittering birds. His convictions were too fixed, too important to him, to allow of any compromise, even that of presenting them in their most conciliatory form. They had to appear in all their forcible nudity, without the drapery of convention; and being further, (if, as often happened, politics were the subject of discussion), expressive of a strongly pessimistic view, were inevitably staggering to the average hearer. Those, and there must have been many, who got no further than this stage, might undoubtedly have thought him harsh, dictatorial, and unsympathetic; and it must have been difficult for them to realize that this outer crust concealed a nature of very unusual sensitiveness, delicacy, and tenderness. An authoritarian he certainly was, both philosophically and by temperament; and the comparatively secluded life which he had lived for so many years had no doubt confirmed this tendency of his nature. Also those mystic apprehensions which had always, and increasingly with the approach of age, been the main, almost the exclusive, interest of his spiritual life, were so necessarily incommunicable to ordinary minds that he can have found but few with whom he could establish relations of true intercourse on the subjects for which alone he really cared. It was indeed almost pathetic to see how eager he was that those who were in sympathy with him generally should be carried to the full height of his mystic vision and find, as he did, the clouds change to solid mountains under their feet; and the endeavour to secure this boon for his friends, constantly baffled as it must have been, would inevitably confirm him in mental isolation.

I have however completely failed in my endeavour if I have not, in some measure, brought home to my readers a conviction of the essential geniality of his nature, of the depth of his affections, and of the loyalty of his friendship.

END OF VOL. I.

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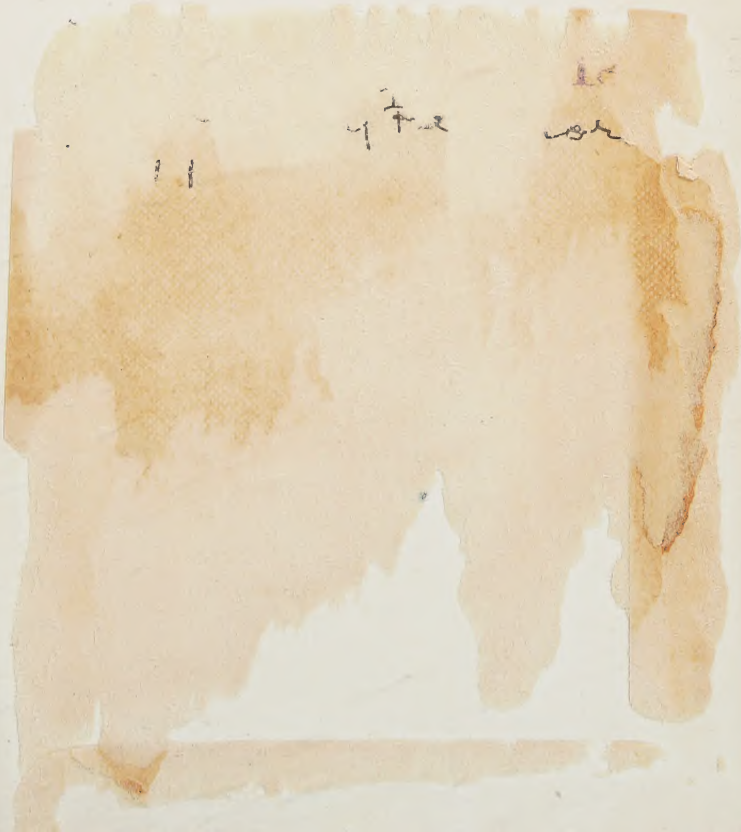
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